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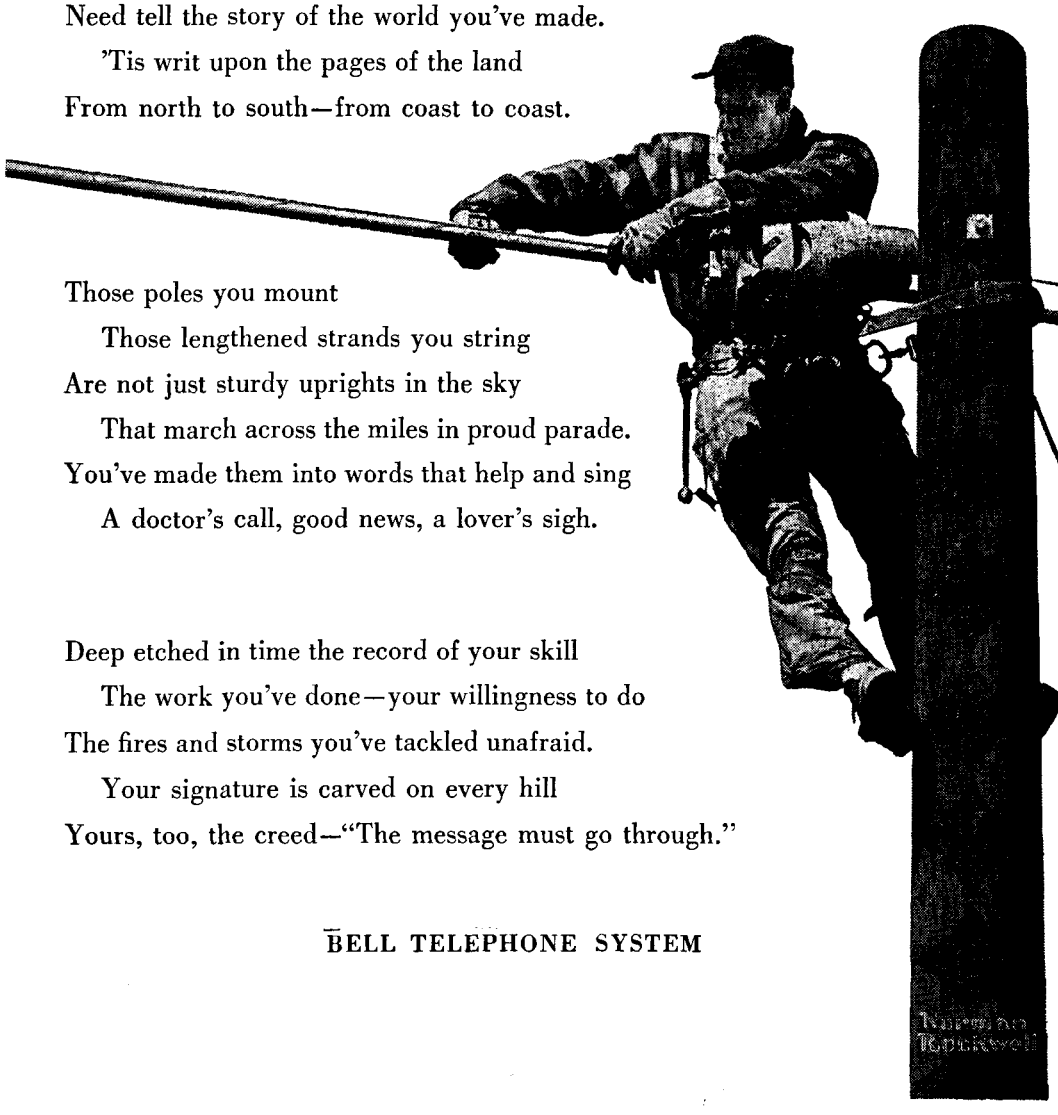

Those poles you mount
Those lengthened strands you string
Are not just sturdy uprights in the sky
That march across the miles in proud parade.
You've made them into words that help and sing
A doctor's call, good news, a lover's sigh.

Deep etched in time the record of your skill
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The fires and storms you've tackled unafraid.
Your signature is carved on every hill
Yours, too, the creed—"The message must go through."

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THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR

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THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR

VOLUME 22 *Autumn, 1953* NUMBER 4

Loyalty and Freedom

ARCHIBALD MacLEISH

TWO THINGS BECOME INCREASINGLY EVIDENT as the sickness of our American democracy approaches its inevitable crisis: one is the surpassing genius of the founders of this Republic; the other is the transience of even the greatest of political resolutions. It was the supreme achievement of the generation of the American Revolution that it solved the most difficult of all constitutional problems, the problem of the reconciliation within one society of the conflicting human desires for freedom and for community. It may well be the ultimate shame of our generation that with us that resolution fails.

A free society is, of course, a contradiction in terms. Freedom means individual freedom: above all, freedom of conscience and freedom of mind. Society means community of some sort: not only membership in the community, but loyalty to the community. Only where all men think and believe alike does the contradiction disappear; and such societies, as history has demonstrated over and over again, are not alive but dead. Elsewhere, a resolution must be found not in conformity, but in the very nature of human difference. It was there that the authors of the American Constitution

✪ ARCHIBALD MacLEISH is Boylston Professor at Harvard University. This article is based upon an address given by him last December at the opening of the William Pyle Philips Collection of Renaissance Literature at Haverford College.

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found it. They rejected as unworkable and offensive the notion of an established creed or an official doctrine or a national belief to be held in common by all Americans. Conformity of belief has, from time to time in the history of the world, overrun whole populations like a plague, flinging them into fanatical religious wars upon unbelievers everywhere; but it is not by chills and fevers such as these that nations are established or that nations endure. Nations are created, nations endure, by the men who compose them—the actual men, the individual men. And it was in the individuality of the individual men, in their differences from each other, that the founders of this Republic put their trust.

Men were to create a community in America not because they were to belong to the same race, not because they were to subscribe to the same political doctrines, not because they were to worship in the same church, but because they were to share a common experience, the experience of being free together. They were to be free to be men and so to share freedom and so to become a community and a nation. Their loyalty was to be a loyalty to the right of each one of them, and so of all of them, to be free. It was the conviction of our ancestors—a conviction which they wrote into their Constitution in the form of an explicit limitation on the law-making power of the central government—that loyalty to the liberty of every man to believe what he chooses would outlast loyalty to any formulation of belief whatever. That that conviction was well grounded, the history of the American people down to our own time has conclusively demonstrated.

But though the American resolution has proved itself under varying conditions over a considerable period of time, it was never more than a balancing of conflicting human needs. A shift in either direction—toward a more passionate assertion of the demands of individual freedom, or a more jealous insistence upon the precedence of the community—was always possible and did, of course, from time to time occur. There was always, in consequence, the danger that one emotional need might so overbalance the other that the underlying structure would collapse. What has been happening in the United States over the period of the past five years or more makes it tragically evident that that danger is now

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both real and present. There has been a massive, almost glacial, shift away from the passion for individual freedom and toward a desire for security of association, of belonging, of conformity.

The change is not a purely American phenomenon. It has been observed elsewhere during recent years and, in some parts of the world, in the most extreme forms. In eastern Europe and in Asia, a cancerous aggravation of the natural human desire for community and association has sent millions of human beings to march in Red Flag parades and Brown Shirt parades and Fascist triumphs —millions of human beings who have found in the community of shouting voices, the community of hatred for the outsiders, the community of persecution and murder, something their sick hearts required. We have not come to that in this Republic, but it is only too clear that the emotions which move us are emotions capable, if similarly perverted, of similar consequences. The same perplexity and hatred and fear which have formed the Communist herds and the Fascist gangs in other countries have already produced their herds and gangs in the United States; and conformity of opinion and belief, the first demands of the mob everywhere, has been secured by methods which differ only in degree from the methods of the Moscow and Berlin streets. When loyalty is put before freedom, and when loyalty is made to mean loyalty not to the right to be free, but to the demands of the majority, with economic and social destruction as the penalty for dissent, the drums of Moscow and Berlin are near enough to hear.

What has been happening in American schools and universities in the past few months is plain enough for any eye to read. The explanation of the successful intrusion of government—or of a group of politicians acting in the name of government—into an area from which the American tradition, if not the American Constitution, excludes it, is to be found in the changed attitude of the American people. We Americans have become increasingly convinced that unless we can believe in something in common, the Communists will take us over. To the Russians, we tell ourselves, communism is a faith. How, then, can we hope to confront it with nothing but the freedom of each one of us to believe what he pleases? And how, unless our educational institutions produce

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like-minded men and women, can we hope to become a like-minded people? And unless we become a like-minded people, how, in this iceberg age of gigantic floating lumps of national mentality, can our nation survive? We can think of no answer either in our own history or elsewhere; and the longing for conformity so overwhelms us that we look on in silence, if not in active approval, while the one freedom which underlies all others—the freedom of the mind—is attacked at the point where its protection is most essential to the Republic, and by methods of hypocrisy and intimidation which shame us all.

It is our silence as a people, far more than the mischievousness of the politicians engaged in this foray, which should give concern to those who truly love the country. There have always been cynical and ambitious politicians, ignorant of the American tradition or contemptuous of its meaning, who would gladly lead the mob against the individual for political advantage. What is new is the encouragement given men of this character by the indifference of the citizens. The eight or ten great newspapers which still maintain their integrity have protested. The leaders of the learned professions and of the American churches and of liberal and labor organizations have condemned the whole campaign of censorship and suppression. But the country is silent when it does not openly applaud. If attacks on individual liberty are conducted in the name of "loyalty," they are justified without more argument. It makes no difference that the "loyalty" asserted is not the loyalty Americans have understood in the past—loyalty to the right of each individual to think and speak as he chooses, loyalty to the ideal of freedom. It makes no difference that the "loyalty" is loyalty to the economic and social and political and military and diplomatic views of the inquisitors. "Loyalty" is in question, and "loyalty" comes before freedom in a time like this.

If "loyalty" continues to come before freedom in the American scale of values, there can be little doubt as to the ultimate outcome. The delicate balance upon which the Republic has maintained itself for almost two hundred years will be destroyed, and the United States will follow Nazi Germany and Communist Russia into that frozen world in which everything coheres and conforms,

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and the life of the individual mind and soul is of no more significance than the life of a single drop of frozen water in an ice floe. No one who believes in the vitality of the American people—no one who recalls the passionate indignation with which they have defended their personal liberties in the past—can suppose that this will happen. But as time goes by and the expected revulsion of opinion against the censors and inquisitors fails to materialize, there is an anxious questioning in many hearts. What has befallen us as a people? Have we truly changed, or have we only forgotten for a time the history out of which we come? Is it our fear of communism, sedulously played upon by the perpetrators of these evils, which destroys our faith in freedom, or has our faith in freedom itself decayed?

History, if honest history is written in the world ahead, perhaps will find an answer. We ourselves can only guess at one. We would guess, I think, that fear of communism is not the entire explanation. There is a limit to the extent to which a virile and sanguine people, united in a contempt for Communist theory and Communist practice, can be terrified by cries that they are about to be converted to communism by secret operatives and darkling conspiracies. We would guess also, I suppose, that the explanation is not to be found in any conscious decline in our devotion to the ideas of freedom. Those who now attack personal freedom at its roots in the universities, and who threaten to attack it in the churches and the press, are themselves obliged to use the vocabulary of freedom to justify their activities. What would seem to us to have changed, I think, is not our belief in freedom but our *faith* in freedom—our faith that freedom will really work—that it can, itself, and by its own means, survive the attacks of enemies as gigantic, as closely integrated, as disciplined, as controlled as the enemy it faces now.

But to say this is to say, at the same time, something more. Faith in freedom rests necessarily upon faith in man. The American belief in man was the condition precedent to the existence of the American Republic. It was because men like John Adams and Franklin and Jefferson believed in man that they believed in the possibility that men might govern themselves: the possibility, that

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is to say, of freedom. A *loss* of faith in freedom results, by the same logic, from a *loss* of faith in man. And it is that, almost certainly, which has occurred in the United States. We no longer wholly trust the power of the institutions of freedom to defend themselves by the methods of freedom because we no longer wholly believe in the capacity of men to live as men in a world such as our technicians and scientists have revealed to us. Our symbol—the symbol which made us the nation we were—has shriveled.

If this, or something like it, is the explanation of our tragic loss of heart, then at least part of the responsibility can be allocated readily enough. The underlying failure is a failure of education. We have increasingly ignored the human things, the things of the mind and spirit, the proofs of man's dignity and worth, in the teaching of our schools and even in our universities; and we are paying the inevitable price. Generations of schoolboys taught only techniques and tools produce generations of men to whom only techniques and tools are important, men who have no comprehension of their own resources or those of their neighbors, men who know nothing of those great conceptions of human destiny, those patterns of life and death, which our kind has produced over countless generations.

In the struggle for the defense of human freedom, everything depends on the vitality of the belief in man, on the health and vigor of the human things; and there is no way to maintain the human things but to know them. A man of morality in Rome was a man who knew and respected the mores, the acknowledged human ways, the forms and orders; and it is not otherwise with us. A free man is a man who knows and loves the things of which a man in freedom is capable. Only those who know what a man can be at his best, in his arts, in his conceptions, in his imagination and his realization, are capable of valuing freedom, and only those who are capable of valuing freedom are likely to defend it.

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America and Art

LOUIS KRONENBERGER

THE COMPELLING FACT ABOUT ART IN AMERICA is that it is not organic. It has almost no share in shaping our life; it offers, rather, compensation for the shapelessness. And just because we prescribe a certain amount of art for ourselves as a kind of corrective —being "deficient" in art as we might be in calcium or iron—we regard it less as ordinary nourishment than as a tonic, something we gulp rather than sip, regard with esteem and yet suspicion, and either require to be made up with a pleasant taste or exult in because it tastes unpleasant. The American feeling, or lack of feeling, for art has been immemorially easy to satirize, whether at the one extreme of Babbittry or at the other of Bohemia. All the same, for whatever reasons, such feeling has long been part of the American character—which is to say that the American bent, the American genius, has honestly moved in other directions. Like the Romans and the Germans, we are not an artistic people. This may be partly the result of our so long being able to reach out, rather than having to turn inward; of our possessing a vast continent to traverse, subdue, explore, develop, grow rich on, so that there was no husbanding or skilled handling of resources, no modifying what we started with or were saddled with into something gracious and expressive. A race, like an individual, develops a style in part through what it has uniquely, in part through what it has too little of. French prose owes its dry, neat lucidity to the same things that produced a general lack of magic in French poetry; French women owe their chic, I would think, to their general lack of girlish beauty. Americans have suffered from overabundance—from not needing to substitute art for nature, form for substance, method for materials. At the very

✪ LOUIS KRONENBERGER, author, drama critic and lecturer, is a visiting professor at Brandeis University and City College of New York. "America and Art" is part of a book on American culture, to appear early in 1954 under the title of *Company Manners*.

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point where a patina might begin to appear, or mellowness to suffuse, we have abandoned what we made for something newer, brisker, shinier; and with each such act, we have become a little less "artistic" in our approach. But of course there is more to it than that. An artistic people—the French, the Chinese, the ancient Greeks—is one whose necessities are made the comelier by its dreams, but whose dreaming is equally controlled by its necessities: the two are integrated, are never so harshly at odds that the dreaming must serve as a lurid compensation. With an artistic people, a kind of good sense regulates both its acquisitive side and its aspiring one; and from deprecating excess on a large scale, it eventually does so in small ways as well. Hence the design of existence stands forth more powerfully than the décor; and because design, unlike décor, affects a whole society, the national traits and instincts and responses get beyond cost or size or class, and equally characterize the rich and the poor, the cultivated and the unlettered. There is always a sense of bone structure about an artistic people—think of the Spaniards—a touch of severity, of economy. There is, I suppose, something rather classic than romantic—a sense of the ancestor as well as the individual.

An artistic people need not (and very likely will not) be profoundly poetic or mystical, as the English and the Germans are. It is plainly because the English and the Germans lead such double lives, because one extreme must almost atone for the other, because dreaming grows out of repressions or helps to stamp out reality, that two nations so given to vulgar instincts and material aims should be capable of such splendid intensities—intensities which, for all that, do constitute excesses. And we too, as a people, are driven to compensate; are so excessively aspiring for being so excessively acquisitive; come back to God through guilt or satiety; go on binges with Beauty because it is no part of our daily life—and we somehow think the extent of the undertaking will make up for the quality. Our magnates are always giving away millions not too shiningly acquired; our aging plutocrats leave a spendthrift order for art like the flashy sports who buy their women ten dozen American Beauty roses. Nothing amuses or appalls us more than a gangster's funeral with its carloads of flowers and wreaths; and noth-

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ing teaches us less. The gangster's funeral is actually the model for Broadway's super-musicals, for the murals on civic architecture, for Florida's luxury resorts; and the gangster's funeral is itself a late development, the descendant of the Newport "cottage"—the only difference being that at Newport conspicuous waste was confined to living, where in Chicago it specialized in death.

But it is not just the excesses born of wealth that have failed to make us an artistic people. After all, corsairs and conquistadors are the ancestors of *most* cultures; and French châteaux and Italian palazzi of even the best periods stress sheer display quite as much as they stress beauty. We may just come near enough to being an artistic people to explain why we *are* not and perhaps *cannot be* one. We are an inventive and adaptive people; and thus our whole effort, our whole genius, is to modify rather than mold, to make more efficient rather than more expressive. We are dedicated to improvement—to improving our minds and our mousetraps, our inventions and our diets. We are so dedicated to improvement that we neither ask nor care whether a thing needs to be improved, is able to be improved, or, qualifying as an improvement, will necessarily seem like a benefit. We never seem to wonder whether we may not be complicating things by simplifying them, or making them useless by so constantly making them over. But the ability to invent, the desire to improve, may partly spring from our having got so much later a start than other civilizations—from our being at a log-cabin and homespun stage when Europe had long achieved silks and marble, and then lagging for so long behind them. We first were made competitive from a sense of our marked inferiority to others; we then became, from our sense of our natural wealth and resources, competitive among ourselves; and we are now, of course, inventive *because* we are competitive: last year's model must be disparaged so that this year's model can be sold. But no matter how genuine was the original impulse, or how sheerly commercial it is today, inventiveness has become ingrained in our practice, and our source of constant pride; and even among the best of us—unless we are extremely vigilant—it is now an influence on our taste. Abroad, avant-gardism expressed the crying need among old cultures for new forms and feelings; here, we often seem to be breaking with

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tradition before establishing it; here, experiment has a gadget air, a will-to-invent about it, as often as a sense of rebellion or release. This gadget aspect crops up everywhere, in the most unexpected places. Thus, our highbrow criticism is constantly inventing and amending a vocabulary—one that somehow will seem a special, up-to-the-minute possession of critics, exactly as the latest models in cars or television sets will seem a special, up-to-the-minute possession of prosperous suburban life. The actual character, too, of our present-day literary jargon—so much of it psychiatric and sociological—is that of a profoundly inartistic, indeed, an aesthetically quite barbarous yet irrepressibly inventive people. Take just one simple example. In the entire language I doubt whether there exists an uglier word, or one less needed for the use it has been put to, than the word *sensitivity*. One special and particular meaning could be allowed it—the sensitivity, let us say, of a photographic plate to light. But even among critics with a historical sense and a cultivated ear, it has almost completely ousted the two words that for centuries so happily shouldered, and so neatly divided, the burden: *sensibility* and *sensitiveness*. But the whole highbrow vocabulary, the whole need for new spring-and-fall models in literary language—*subsume* one year, *mystique* the next, *exfoliate* the year after—exhibits our national need to adapt and amend and apply at any cost, with no great concern for the urgency, and perhaps even less for the rightness, of the words themselves. And even more indicative than their original "coinage" is the indecent speed with which they become almost unbearable clichés; even more, also, than their coinage itself is the fact that they are so uniformly pretentious, so very rarely picturesque. If only critics would read Dr. Johnson for his wisdom and not for his choice of words. We are inartistic, indeed, in our very approach to art.

We have never as a people regarded art as something to live with, to freely delight in, to call by its first name. Perhaps this derives from something beyond an inventive streak that keeps us restless, or an awe that makes us uncomfortable: perhaps had we had more opportunity to live with art, we might have acquired a more relaxed attitude toward it. It has never been on our doorstep; we have had to go in search of it, go doubly in search—as much to discover what

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it is as where it is. The journeys have had a little of the air of pilgrimages; the works of art, a great deal of the sanctity of shrines. The whole burden of our criticism, our constant cultural plaint, is how scant, and impure, and imperfect, and isolated art in America has been—which, inevitably, has conditioned our approach to it. We insist on strong, emphatic, unmistakable reactions; we either swoon or snub, analyze at tedious length or dismiss with a mere wave of the hand. We go at art, in other words, not like casual, cultivated shoppers, but like a race of antique-shop dealers for whom everything is either magnificently authentic or the merest fake; and the result—though of course there are other reasons, too —is that we cannot take art in our stride. So belated and uneasy an approach has made us about art what Prohibition made my whole generation about wine: either frank, unblushing ignoramuses or comically solemn snobs. Different levels of Americans reveal very different attitudes toward art; but what is perhaps most significant is that they all reveal one marked kind of attitude or another. They either tend to hold back lest they commit howlers; or to go into raptures lest they be taken for clods; or to pooh-pooh the whole business lest they seem longhaired and sissified; or to purse their lips and utter pronunciamentos lest they seem just vulgarly susceptible or humanly responsive.

If classifying them as fence-straddlers or as poseurs or as philistines or as prigs is to simplify and even travesty the matter, it may yet help account for the fact that we are not a people for whom, at any level, art is just a natural and congenial aspect of existence. The very "uselessness" of it—the fact that art, like virtue, is its own reward; again, the very magic of it—the fact that it cannot be reduced to a formula or equation; the utter arrogance of it—the fact that money cannot buy it nor American salesmanship or elbow grease achieve it: these are, at the very outset, reasons for mystification and distrust. *Its* kind of arrogance, or refusal to be won on extrinsic terms—as of a high-mettled, beautiful girl whom no suitor can win on the strength of his bank account, his family background, or his sober, industrious habits—seems improper, even unethical, to a people who can respect putting a high price on something, who can approve and even enjoy a hard tussle till things are

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won, but who can no more understand than they can approve that something is beyond negotiations, is just not to be bought. Art to them is not a high-mettled girl, but an extremely unreasonable woman. Art's kind of magic again—art's refusal to be achieved through laboratory methods, through getting up charts or symposiums or sales conferences, through looking at smears under the microscope—its magic seems behind the times, almost downright retarded, to a people with a genius for the synthetic. Art's kind of uselessness, finally—its non-vitamin-giving health, its non-pep-you-up modes of pleasure, its non-materialistic enrichment—quite genuinely confuses a people who have been educated to have something to show for their efforts, if only a title or a medal or a diploma. Art, for most Americans, is a very queer fish—it can't be reasoned with, it can't be bribed, it can't be doped out or duplicated; above all, it can't be cashed in on.

Someone, Max Beerbohm perhaps, once defined a Bohemian as a person who uses things for what they're not intended—a window drapery, let us say, for a ball dress, or a goldfish bowl for a soup tureen. And this just a little defines the American sense of the artistic. We must endow everything with a new twist, an added value, an extra function. We literally cannot let well enough alone; hence we very often make it worse—and never more, perhaps, than when we also make it better. The new element, the new effect, the new use to which an art form is put, very often has to do with achieving something more tractable or palatable or painless or time- or labor-saving; with offering, at the very least, old wine in new bottles, and much more to our satisfaction, old wine in plastic containers or ice cream cones. Thus we have Somerset Maugham re-edit and abridge the classics; we get a present-day version of Buckingham's *The Rehearsal*, a Negro *Juno and the Paycock*, a *Cherry Orchard* laid in Mississippi; we have Mr. Orson Welles telescoping five of Shakespeare's plays into one; we have something written for the piano performed on the violin, something intended for men taken over by women. We're not, to be sure, the only nation that does such things; but I think we're the only nation that feels a compulsive urge to do them. Where the Germans have a particular genius for ersatz, for

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substitutions, we have one for new twists and gimmicks, new mixtures and combinations. We simply *have* to tamper: if we don't cut the words, we must add to the music; if we don't change the story, we must shift the locale. Nowhere else, surely, can there be such a compulsion to make plays out of books, musicals out of plays, *Aida*'s into *My Darlin' Aida*'s; to insert scenes, delete characters, include commentators; to turn gas stations into cathedrals, or churches into dance halls. Out of Plato and Berkeley we get Transcendentalism; out of Transcendentalism we concoct Christian Science; and then, almost immediately, Jewish Science out of Christian. Many nations have discovered the devil in dancing, but we are perhaps the first to find God through calisthenics. And no doubt we create from all this the illusion that we are notably experimental in the arts, ever seeking new forms, contriving new functions, establishing new perspectives. But, even ignoring the material or commercial side of it all, our contrivance of so many artful blends and twists and variants is really our avoidance of art itself, exactly as our craving for sensations argues a distaste for, or fear of, experiences. Our whole artistic effort, if it does not parallel, then at least involves our genius for concocting the mixed drink and for putting the packaging ahead of the product. The result—from which almost all of us suffer more than we realize—is a kind of vulgarization, and one that can take place at high levels no less than at low ones. Our stressing significance in art rather than intensity, our present search for symbolic figures and concealed meanings and multiple levels: isn't this part of our compulsion to introduce something new, add something extra, offer something unprecedented? Does it not bear witness, also, to our intellectual ingenuity rather than our aesthetic responsiveness? Hasn't the new multi-level *Pierre* or *Confidence Man* a kinship with the new split-level house, or the concealed meanings with the concealed plumbing, or the indirect approach with the indirect lighting, or the taste for knotty problems with the taste for knotty pine? I do not think I am being anti-intellectual when I say that in America the intellect itself is being over-used and misused in the world of art, where—after all—the most thoughtful elucidation avails nothing without the right, pure, instinctive response; for

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in art the reverse of Wordsworth's saying is also true and immensely important: in art, there are tears that do often lie too deep for thoughts.

Given our inventiveness, such endless and manifold vulgarization is inevitable. No race can make an idea go farther than we can. We get the last ounce of derivable income from it; we carry it, indeed, to distances that virtually obscure the original starting point. From the classic sandwich made with bread, we evolve the triple-decker made with ice cream; from the first motel, that could hardly have competed with a bath house, we are now contriving structures that will outdo—if not soon outmode—the Ritz. And quite beyond our double-barreled desire to make things profitable as well as attractive, all this technical skill and inventive cleverness must in the end conspire as much against our creative instincts as against our artistic ones. A nation that can so marvelously concoct must less and less feel any need to create. We are developing a genius for rewrite at the expense of one for writing, for stage directors who shall do the work of dramatists, for orchestrators who shall do the work of composers. Everything today must carefully and exactly conform to public taste, yet offer a new wrinkle into the bargain—we insist on what might be called a kind of Murphy-bed of Procrustes.

The effect of this vulgarization is almost sure to be pervasive and permanent. There is something disarming, often indeed unnoticeable, about vulgarization itself. Sheer vulgarity quickly stands self-condemned, hence tends quickly to correct itself. Or where it persists—as representing something congenial to a particular social milieu or human type—it is so blatant as to isolate itself and proclaim its own quarantine. So long as what is "wrong" can be quickly spotted, and thereafter vividly contrasted with what is "right," whether or not it continues to exist, it can no longer triumph. The most insidious aspect of vulgarity, I would think, concerns not those to whom its appeal is obvious and immediate, but those, rather, whom it gradually and imperceptibly manages to win over, those who in the beginning are partly superior to it and who only by habituation sink to its level. A vulgarity that can thus contaminate

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won't often, it seems clear, be of a primitive or glaring sort; it will be, rather, a worm in the apple, a sort of Greek bearing gifts. In the world of art, such vulgarity may boast that it does far more good than it does harm, that it makes many people respond to what they might otherwise pass by. I'm not speaking of the out-and-out popularization, but rather of such things as the movie version of *Henry V* or Stokowski's arrangements of Bach—of things offered under the auspices of culture and aimed at reasonably cultured people. This form of vulgarization will by no means altogether misrepresent or even too greatly discolor. And though a severe taste may resist or reject it at once, a fairly sensitive taste—what I suppose is most conveniently called a middlebrow taste that, if left alone, might come to appreciate Bach or Shakespeare "neat"—will not resist or reject the adulteration, will soon, in fact, come to prefer and eventually to require it.

Vulgarization isn't always a matter of making things pleasanter to the taste, or easier to swallow; it can also consist—which can constitute the highbrow maneuver—in making them more difficult and abstruse, rather resembling the homely girl who goes out of her way to accentuate her homeliness. It is as possible to defeat the primary end of art, the sense of beauty, by minimizing it as by rouging it up. Short cuts represent one kind of vulgarization, labyrinths represent another. The highbrow procedure, if we were to raid the vocabulary that accompanies it, might be called counter-vulgarization. It constitutes, in any case, no cure or corrective for the middlebrow ailment, but rather a different kind of disease; and though its very lack of cheap allure will cause it to render art far less of a disservice than the rouge-and-syrup process, it is yet equally a barrier to our becoming an artistic people. What with art being something, on the one side, that slides smoothly down our gullets and on the other, something to be chewed long after any flavor is left, we can seldom any longer, I think, get the fine, sharp, vivid, simple first experience of art that must be the preliminary to any more complex one. Something is always doused over it or drained out of it, hiding the flavor or heightening it, removing gristle or adding lumps; or the thought or look of the thing, before we even

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bite into it, conditions us. A man can no longer even read, let us say, the "Ode to a Nightingale" without the slightly guilty or, at any rate, self-conscious feeling that it is "romantic poetry."

As a result of the vulgarizing effort to make things palatable and of a counter-vulgarization that renders things parched, there is being beggared out of existence a high yet workable cultural ideal, a climate in which a *sense* of art can flourish. And it seems to me that the lack of a proper climate for art is a much more serious shortcoming in America than the small number of works of art themselves. Culture—in the old-fashioned, well-rounded sense of something civilized and civilizing alike—has not simply failed as a reality in America, but is fast fading as an ideal. Such a culture stands in relation to formal education as good wine to the grape: it is a fermentation, a mellowing, a very special and at the same time wholly characterizing element; and it permeates society in terms of its sensibilities no less than its art. One can, of course, all too easily exalt such a culture as a way of disparaging much that is essential and even healthful in modern life; and one can sigh for it on a sentimental basis, in standpat terms. All the same, any way of life that lacks its best qualities can scarcely be looked upon as cultivated at all; at any rate, no amount of education or knowledge or skill can begin to mean the same thing. And actually the climate I desiderate is no more than a salubrious, breeze-swept temperate zone; it is not forbidding, nor oppressively patrician, nor strenuously democratic. A cool, dry judgment is mingled there with gusto and generous appreciation; the people there are no more mired in the past than running wild in the present; its tone is altogether urbane without being even faintly genteel; it boasts neither untouchables nor sacred cows; it displays a constant corrective irony and perhaps not overmuch virtue; and everyone there is just sufficiently wrongheaded and prejudiced and inconsistent to be attractively human.

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Carnevale

ALLISON ROSS

O merry-go-round go round go round
merry go round with the music.

Not wooden horses painted white
with pink tongues and gilt bridles
nor unicorns blue-lacquered with
mauve reins and fuchsia saddles—
but scarlet coffins with tambourines
and creped and draped black cradles,
and see the gentlemen hypnotized,
the ladies in a trance
with frozen mouths and pupils fixed
in wide-eyed arrogance.
Nailed to the swift-revolving floor
O see their hobbies prance
all up and down the piston rods
in static competence!

A greased politico riding high
on his diamond-studded gavel
gazing at it with mystic love
like Buddha at his navel,
a lady reining with pale ringed hands
her lipstick on a swivel,
a monocled statistician—what
an elegant figure spurring

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his racy inside-out report!
a minister deftly steering
his pulpit draped with an altar cloth,
a housewife, witched, aspiring
heavenward on her trusty broom—
O marvel at their daring!

O merry-go-round go round go round
revolving cemetery
go round go round O merry

✪ ALLISON ROSS's poems have appeared in *Saturday Review of Literature, Harper's Bazaar, Lyric, Saturday Evening Post* and several anthologies.

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Human Rights and the American Bar

WILLIAM T. GOSSETT

RECENTLY I HAVE DONE SOME READING on the general reputation and standing of the Bar in this country. This proved to be a discouraging experience. Throughout, I encountered a jarring refrain that runs something like this:

> The lawyers of today are conspicuously remiss in their duties to society. Lawyers no longer hold the position of eminence and leadership they once held. Blinkered by fat fees and loyalty to special interests, lawyers no longer contribute substantially to the common welfare. Indeed, they have degenerated into a group of technicians and specialists. The competence of most lawyers cannot be questioned, but they seem to lack a sense of obligation to their fellow-man. Et cetera.

These are not the querulous complaints of laymen alone, but are a recurring refrain in contemporary legal writing and utterances. Note, for example, the words of the late Chief Justice Stone: "Candor would compel even those of us who have the most abiding faith in our profession, and the firmest belief in its capacity for future usefulness, to admit that in our time the Bar has not maintained its traditional position of public influence and leadership."

More recently, Professor Llewellyn of Columbia Law School put the matter bluntly: "Our men of the law have not been wise to let slip a standing which, in this country, they used to have. They used to be, as of course (along with preachers, prophets, and successful generals), the people on whom other people called to tell them what any trouble was all about. They used to be, also, and again as of course (along with political leaders), the people to whom other people turned when they wanted to know how to get things done."

Such observations—and they are so numerous as to make a melancholy chorus—constitute a serious indictment. Moreover, there appears to be substantial factual basis for this view. Elmo Roper recently conducted a survey in which participants were asked

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to rank the order of importance to the community of public school teachers, clergymen, public officials, merchants and lawyers. In this public opinion race, the American Bar finished last. We lawyers straggled in behind even the merchants! At such a time it is comforting to recall, by way of rationalization, that public opinion polls have not always been uncompromisingly accurate.

Many lawyers like to recall the Golden Age of the Bar. Golden ages always appear to have been some glorious yesterday—the days of youth, which, in retrospect, glow with dream-like perfection. The great epics of literature, from Homer on, are concerned with those earlier periods when men were like gods. The chroniclers of more temporal matters, like Ty Cobb, look wistfully backward to the bygone days when batters were better and pitchers threw harder, more bases were stolen and more squeeze plays attempted, and baseball was not a game but an exotic art practiced by supermen.

Perhaps, therefore, we can take *cum grano salis* this present-day criticism of and apparent lack of confidence in lawyers. If we dig deeply enough into history, we can produce evidence that lawyers never have been what "they used to be"; that they never did really enjoy a golden age. As far back as Biblical times, they have been mistrusted, lampooned and castigated. These words are from the eleventh chapter of Luke: "Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers."

And here are some comments on the legal profession by various eminent authors:

Sir Thomas More, describing the Utopians, observed, "They have no lawyers among them, for they consider them a sort of people whose profession it is to disguise matters."

Here is Benjamin Franklin: "God works wonders now and then; Behold! A lawyer, an honest man."

Now a poet, John Keats: "I think we may class the lawyer in the natural history of monsters."

And, of course, Carl Sandburg's lines are unpleasantly familiar:

> Why is there always a secret singing
> When a lawyer cashes in?
> Why does a hearse horse snicker
> Hauling a lawyer away?

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I certainly do not intend in these few pages to add my laments to this chorus. I want, instead, to discuss briefly my belief that lawyers have a traditional function that is indispensable to a democracy; that opportunities lie all about to exercise this function; that only out of the vigorous discharge of this function can the reputation of the profession become what every lawyer would like it to be.

Let me first provide a bit of historical perspective.

At the time that lawyers played leading roles in the drafting of our Constitution, they were as a class the respected leaders of our emerging society. In 1835, Alexis de Tocqueville, looking on the American scene with unbiased eye, observed that the Bench and Bar of America constituted the only true American aristocracy.

There were several reasons for this pre-eminence. A minor reason was the fact that lawyers, preachers and teachers comprised the only educated class in the country. They were the only persons competent to advise upon and put together a machinery for self-government. They were the draftsmen of the instruments, charters, resolutions, contracts and other supplements to a new social organization. Of the fifty-two signers of the Declaration of Independence, twenty-six were lawyers. But a major reason for the once enviable position of lawyers runs far beyond the mere fact of their special competence to perform these technical tasks. Yesterday's lawyers, in addition to the requisite background and knowledge, had three great qualities: courage, imagination and a militant faith in a free society.

So the lawyers were in the forefront on issues of wide public import. And of these issues, none seemed to them more crucial than the safeguards of freedom. In debating and settling the great political and constitutional problems of that day, these questions were ever in the forefront: "What will be its effect upon freedom? How can we protect the individual from arbitrary power?" It was their persistent attention to such questions that gave these men their positions of prestige and influence. Thus, they earned the confidence and respect of their fellow-men. Their names—Marshall, Jay, Hamilton, Jefferson, Webster, Clay and a host of others—ring down through the ages of legal history because they saw so clearly that the tasks of the law were the tasks of statesmanship and liberty.

Following this period of constitutional development, the United

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States moved rapidly from a predominantly agrarian economy to an industrial society. The Industrial Revolution burst upon the scene with its host of fresh problems, most of them without precedent, particularly in a young country just learning to live under an experimental form of government. It was only natural, therefore, that lawyers should have become more and more involved in the affairs of business, absorbed in the problems of commercial expansion.

The very progress of our society, in its great surge forward into industrial might, demanded new legal patterns. And the lawyers of that day often performed brilliant service. They perfected—indeed, devised in many cases—the techniques and forms which made possible the formation, financing and operation of these new industrial organizations. In thus laying the legal foundations for the American Industrial Revolution, they made a notable contribution to the development of this country.

But in the Bar's very preoccupation with the intricate affairs of these important new clients—these business interests—can be found the key to the waning prestige of the legal profession. When the pressure of the new demands was heavy, the legal profession seemed to be too busy to fulfill a challenging duty. Those who had been the architects of the palladium of liberty created the impression that they had abdicated their high position as guardians of the larger interests of the people to become guardians of rapidly growing business interests.

This is the opinion of the legal historians; and it is clearly manifested in the legal history of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Much of what we now perceive to be desirable social legislation was fought bitterly and met initial defeat at the hands of the leading members of the Bar and Bench of that era. There are many examples; I cite only a few. The Sherman Act was almost emasculated by its first important judicial interpretation; the first federal income tax law ultimately required a Constitutional amendment to permit its adoption; the anti-injunction provisions of the Clayton Act were virtually ignored until the Norris-LaGuardia Act emphasized the Congressional intent; and finally, you will recall the abortive course of the various child labor laws and other legislation aimed at social evils that were perceived by legislators but appar-

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ently were unappreciated by leaders of the Bar and many of the members of the judiciary.

The lawyer of 1907 in his new role of advisor to and advocate for business interests prompted John Dos Passos to deplore the intellectual decadence of the Bar. He saw the new situation as marking "a transformation [of the law] from a profession to a business."

Judge Vanderbilt recently wrote that a great lawyer has to meet five major requirements: he must be a wise counselor; a skilled advocate; an improver of the profession, the courts and the law; a leader of public opinion; and a selfless public servant.

It is noteworthy, however, that few of the complaints against the Bar have to do with professional competence. There were, and are, incompetents in the profession; but on the whole, the practice of law is at a high level of technical skill. From the workaday jobs of will-drawing and contract-drafting to the advocacy of important issues, the American people are being well served by the Bar.

Nor do many of the complaints have to do with the unwillingness of members of the Bar to engage in public or community services. On the contrary, an imposing statistical demonstration could be made, I am sure, that lawyers as a group contribute as much as, if not more than, any other group to the total of citizenship activities: as members of Congress, presidents of Community Chests, leaders in civic improvement efforts, and so on. The really serious complaints against the Bar today have to do, it seems to me, with our attitudes on fundamental issues—with our posture, if you will—in the eyes of a society whose respect and confidence we want to deserve.

We should be the first to recognize that there is a proposition at the heart of American life which is the constant and overriding preoccupation of the people; and that the people seem to give their confidence and praise to those who endeavor to protect this proposition from substantial impairment. The proposition is that, no matter how complex society may be or become, the individual must be the focus of all public and private efforts. It is the belief that the human being has that divine spark which alone insures progress toward a better world. It is the belief that because of this divine spark, every individual, however cantankerous or sinful he may be, has basic rights which the self-interest of society demands be pro-

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tected and expanded, consistently, of course, with the rights of the group of which he is a part.

I suggest that it is here that we may begin to discern the role that we must play if we would achieve again a Golden Age of the Bar: it is the role so aptly described by Judge Vanderbilt as the "unselfish servant" who attends to the dreams, the hopes and the aspirations of a free people. I refer, of course, to that whole crucial complex of problems surrounding individual liberties today. Our time has much in common with those earlier days when lawyers played a leading part in putting together the strong structure of the Republic. Now, as then, the people are nervous and uncertain of their destiny. Now, as then, many are doubtful about the validity of the institutions of freedom. And now, as then, the people are turning to lawyers, I think, to help them secure their liberties against encroachments from many sides.

I shall mention only a few of the matters concerning which I think people are seeking us out. To the first and foremost of these, I make only a brief reference: A society founded on the postulate that the preservation of liberty is the purpose and obligation of government is only as sound as the administration of its system of justice. Justice is the *sine qua non* of liberty; and liberty flourishes only "where justice is a matter of right and not merely of governmental grace." A faulty administration of justice, for whatever cause, breeds lack of confidence not only in the system, but more importantly, in the vitality of the concepts on which the system is based.

Among a large percentage of our people there is a discernible mistrust of our judicial system and of the administration of justice. There is, I am afraid, a general feeling that, although the judges themselves for the most part are above reproach, the law itself is a mystery, a bag of tricks, and that resort to law often is an expensive and unrewarding experience—an experience that should be avoided whenever possible.

The recent work of the Bar associations, of committees of the judiciary and of the American Judicature Society, in this connection, is truly an ornament to the profession. But much remains to be done if we are to achieve universal and uniform respect for the administration of justice.

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Not the least of these problems is the sheer cost of litigation. Expanded legal aid services attest to the progress that has been made. But it is not only the indigents who find difficulty in resorting to the law; the person of average income frequently goes without needed legal advice because of the expense involved. Lawyers' reference programs have been helpful, but the problem still exists. Whatever the cause—and there are many—the specter of expense stalks through the entire legal process, and ultimately must be dealt with if American justice is to be as accessible as we wish it to be.

Delay in the conduct of litigation is another sensitive area. It is common knowledge that in New York City, for example, about four years must pass before a case may be expected to come before a jury in the state courts. The same condition exists, to a lesser degree, in the federal courts sitting in that city.

There are, to be sure, many bright as well as somber patches in the administration of justice. With the eyes of the world upon him, Judge Medina, in the trial of the Communists in New York, demonstrated that our judicial system still sets justice first and that even the most despised can receive equality of treatment under the law.

But the processes of justice do not begin and end on the courthouse steps. Consider, for example, current developments in the conduct of Congressional investigations and similar quasi-judicial processes. They have proliferated in recent years and, like the printing of cheap money, have debased the original coin. This once honorable device is today being used in ways that cannot fail to provoke deep concern about maintaining the rights of the individual.

Congressional investigation is essential, of course, to the proper functioning of our governmental machinery. It has been sanctioned by usage and upheld by judicial decision. No thoughtful person would withhold from lawmakers their right—indeed, their duty—to investigate. Public airing of matters relevant to the creation of new law and evaluation of existing law is vital to democracy. But manifestly it is not essential to the investigative process that a person summoned before a legislative committee be denied Constitutional rights: the right to know the charges against him; the right to counsel; the right to cross-examine those who have testified

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against him; the right to call witnesses in his own behalf; and the right to answer then and there the accusations made against him.

It is not essential, moreover, that individuals whose beliefs or conduct are under scrutiny be subjected to public pillory or be slandered with impunity by investigators who are secure in the knowledge that there can be no retaliation in court. And last, but by no means least, there is no need to compound the inherent invasion of individual privacy or the damage to reputation by televising the proceedings. In the light of the abuses which have sprung up in the investigative process, the possible injury to the individual is multiplied many times when his ordeal is projected into the homes of millions of his fellow-citizens.

But the investigative process is only one of the areas that deserve our attention. In our zeal to protect our institutions from attack from within, we commit the fundamental error of employing methods which themselves may undermine the foundations of liberty. I shall mention only a few instances.

For generations, American passports—when they were needed at all—were nothing more than letters of introduction to foreign nations, entitling the bearers to protection by American officials; and traditionally, except for the requirements of other countries, Americans were free to leave the country without any passport or other permit. With the declaration of the national emergency proclaimed by President Roosevelt in 1941, however, it became illegal to depart from the United States without a passport. Under the regulations issued by the State Department, travel without a passport is now permitted only in the Western Hemisphere. Under the construction given to the law by various executive officers, the Secretary of State is now empowered "in his discretion" to deny, invalidate or restrict the use of passports issued to American citizens. Many reasons are given by the State Department for refusal to grant passports. But an increasing number of the refusals inform the applicants merely that their "travel abroad at this time would be contrary to the best interests of the United States." The result is that almost absolute discretion to screen the opinions or personal characteristics of applicants has been assumed by an executive agency, and that agency is imposing an increasing variety of vague, restrictive tests. These are not the methods of democracy, but those of totalitarianism.

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The *Washington Post*, in commenting recently on the exercise of this power, said:

> If citizens of the United States are to be denied the right to travel on such grounds—by the exercise of unchecked and unreviewed discretion on the part of a State Department official—then a curtain will have been thrown around this country uncomfortably similar to the curtain imprisoning Soviet citizens within the confines of Russia.

The action of the State Department in deference to the recent federal court decision in the Anna Bauer case is a step in the right direction and was long overdue.

To turn to another area: in this country we have always had a horror of a society in which freedom of inquiry does not exist, in which criticism is suppressed, in which originality is not encouraged. And so, *censorship* is a word which raises American hackles. We regard it as the antithesis of liberty because we recognize it as a first step toward thought control. We put up with it in wartime because security requires that we do so. But we tell ourselves that, aside from the prohibition of indecencies, we will have none of it in time of peace.

But for all our aversion to censorship, we have it now, today, and in larger measure than is at once apparent. Much of the news that we read or hear and the amusements to which we have access come to us through filters which remove the elements that somebody else feels are undesirable. At the federal government level, we have a Presidential executive order prohibiting even civilian government agencies from releasing information which, in the arbitrary judgment of some department head or designee, might prove helpful to potential enemies. Newspaper editors protested and their trade associations passed resolutions of condemnation. President Truman denied that the order has an "element of censorship." He declared it was not to be used to withhold non-security information or to whitewash mistakes. But the temptation to do just these things is there; and policing is impossible. If the order is necessary to our security, this has not been established. It is an ex parte order which has not been tested in any way. And who knows what sins are being committed in its name?

An even more perilous form of censorship is now abroad in the

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land, a kind of subtle restraint on free expression that is inimical to freedom and one to which our profession owes special attention. This private censorship sometimes comes when certain groups arrogate to themselves the right to prescribe—often successfully—who shall and who shall not work in the motion picture business, in television or radio entertainment, in foundations, or in other public or private enterprises.

We see other groups trying to dictate who shall and who shall not be retained on the faculties of the colleges and universities of the nation. According to these groups, a teacher should be disqualified not because of professional incompetence or overt action, but because of social creed, even though unexpressed in the classroom. Thus, a teacher must conform his views and associations to those which are acceptable to a transient majority. If these self-established censors are to prevail, the risk is that the machinery of American education will become fouled with the sand of fear, and that the American ideal of academic freedom, of bold, adventuresome thinking, of relentless search for truth, will be lost. We ought constantly to remind ourselves of the words of Jefferson regarding the University of Virginia: "This institution will be based on the illimitable freedom of the human mind. For here we are not afraid to follow truth wherever it may lead, nor to tolerate error so long as reason is left free to combat it."

But these unenlightened methods are not limited to the field of education. What we are seeing is an effort on many fronts to suppress ideas—ideas that at this time or with certain groups are unpopular. We are witnessing, in short, a mushrooming of the kind of public and private censorship that springs up in times of national stress and insecurity, when the leaders of a nation lose faith in its strengths, and fear for its weaknesses. Efforts like these could easily bulldoze away the crags and outcroppings of new and controversial ideas and leave behind them in this country only a wasteland of drab conformity.

To be sure, we face menaces that are not to be underestimated. But surely we are not yet at the point where the individual ought to turn over to the state or to any group his right to think. By resorting to such measures we might provide a temporary shield against sub-

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versive influence; but the cost might be the loss of individual dignity and freedom.

Let me recall the case of the Socialist Assemblymen in New York, which has been cited as evidence of the Bar's support of "freedom for the thought we hate," to quote Justice Holmes's immortal line. On that occasion, back in 1920, the New York Bar raised its voice against the refusal of the New York legislature to seat six duly elected Socialist legislators. A leading member of the Bar reminded the legislature that "it is of the essence of the institution of liberty that it be recognized that guilt is personal and cannot be attributed to the holding of opinion or to mere intent, in the absence of overt acts."

Let me turn to a final example. Much of our case before the world rests on our treatment of minority groups in our population —on our handling of the problem of discrimination and unequal opportunity. Our malevolent detractors in the Kremlin and our antagonists outside the Iron Curtain make a mockery of freedom in America by citing, and of course embroidering, the record in this regard. Thus, it becomes not a temporary or internal question, but one that is vital to our national interests. Indeed, if we in the name of democracy are to lay claim to the friendship and understanding of millions of people in other parts of the world, then it is self-evident that we must be worthy of the name which we claim. We have come a long way. But we dare not hide behind a comforting curtain of partial progress which obscures the remaining inequities and the downright violations of American principle that still exist.

These are disturbing and painful questions. Merely posing them and attempting to answer them is an unpopular business. And they are not simple, uncomplicated propositions. They do not yield readily to clear choices between right and wrong. In almost every question that I have raised, there is an assertion of right that can be balanced by an assertion of another right. Thus, while we may generalize about discrimination in housing, we have also to keep in mind the right of owners of property to decide on its uses. We may deplore and decide to do something about the attacks of some groups on colleges and individuals, but we then recognize that such attacks are in themselves a species of criticism, a form of free speech. We

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may be affronted by organized bigots who spread hateful doctrines, but we realize that we may ourselves become self-appointed censors if we attempt to outlaw them.

Finally, it is quite clear that although these are not all matters of law or of needed legislation, they nevertheless run to the heart of justice, which a philosopher once observed "existed long before the law was made." The point is this: it will not suffice for lawyers, of all people, to look the other way and hope that these questions will evaporate or somehow answer themselves. If America is to be the nation we want it to be, "the land of the free and the home of the brave," lawyers must work doggedly and courageously at the solution of these problems. We of the legal profession must face up to our responsibilities. We must fairly balance the interests and draw the lines that must be drawn if solutions are to be found to these difficult questions of human rights. And the solutions, if they are to have perennial validity, must be rooted in justice and understanding—not dictated by expediency.

Here again is the challenge, here again an outstanding opportunity for leadership. The air is alive with argument. There is agreement upon the ends to be achieved; but there is sharp disagreement upon the means to be employed. And so people quite properly are insistently demanding of us that someone set them straight on the rights and wrongs of these controversial issues of our time. The traditional function of lawyers is that of servant to the whole people, guarding justice and expanding the areas of individual freedom. The judgment of history on the lawyers of our generation will be based on how adequately we have fulfilled this noble calling.

Opportunities to exercise our function—to serve the people in a moment of national crisis—lie in profusion about us. Individually and through our organized councils we must work at these tasks with the same intensity and sincerity that we give to improvements in the formal administration of justice and the defense of professional standards. Much more than the prestige of our profession is at stake.

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Mr. Eliot, Mr. Trilling, and *Huckleberry Finn*

LEO MARX

In the losing battle that the plot fights with the characters, it often takes a cowardly revenge. Nearly all novels are feeble at the end. This is because the plot requires to be wound up. Why is this necessary? Why is there not a convention which allows a novelist to stop as soon as he feels muddled or bored? Alas, he has to round things off, and usually the characters go dead while he is at work, and our final impression of them is through deadness.

—E. M. FORSTER

THE ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN has not always occupied its present high place in the canon of American literature. When it was first published in 1885, the book disturbed and offended many reviewers, particularly spokesmen for the genteel tradition.[1] In fact, a fairly accurate inventory of the narrow standards of such critics might be made simply by listing epithets they applied to Clemens' novel. They called it vulgar, rough, inelegant, irreverent, coarse, semi-obscene, trashy and vicious.[2] So much for them. Today (we like to think) we know the true worth of the book. Everyone now agrees that *Huckleberry Finn* is a masterpiece: it is probably the one book in our literature about which highbrows and lowbrows can agree. Our most serious critics praise it. Never-

[1] I use the term "genteel tradition" as George Santayana characterized it in his famous address "The Genteel Tradition in American Philosophy," first delivered in 1911 and published the following year in his *Winds of Doctrine*. Santayana described the genteel tradition as an "old mentality" inherited from Europe. It consists of the various dilutions of Christian theology and morality, as in transcendentalism—a fastidious and stale philosophy of life no longer relevant to the thought and activities of the United States. "America," he said, "is a young country with an old mentality." (Later references to Santayana also refer to this essay.)

[2] For an account of the first reviews, see A. L. Vogelback, "The Publication and Reception of *Huckleberry Finn* in America," *American Literature*, XI (November, 1939), 260-272.

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theless, a close look at what two of the best among them have recently written will likewise reveal, I believe, serious weaknesses in current criticism. Today the problem of evaluating the book is as much obscured by unqualified praise as it once was by parochial hostility.

I have in mind essays by Lionel Trilling and T. S. Eliot.[3] Both praise the book, but in praising it both feel obligated to say something in justification of what so many readers have felt to be its great flaw: the disappointing "ending," the episode which begins when Huck arrives at the Phelps place and Tom Sawyer reappears. There are good reasons why Mr. Trilling and Mr. Eliot should feel the need to face this issue. From the point of view of scope alone, more is involved than the mere "ending"; the episode comprises almost one-fifth of the text. The problem, in any case, is unavoidable. I have discussed *Huckleberry Finn* in courses with hundreds of college students, and I have found only a handful who did not confess their dissatisfaction with the extravagant mock rescue of Nigger Jim and the denouement itself. The same question always comes up: "What went wrong with Twain's novel?" Even Bernard DeVoto, whose wholehearted commitment to Clemens' genius is well known, has said of the ending that "in the whole reach of the English novel there is no more abrupt or more chilling descent."[4] Mr. Trilling and Mr. Eliot do not agree. They both attempt, and on similar grounds, to explain and defend the conclusion.

Of the two, Mr. Trilling makes the more moderate claim for Clemens' novel. He does admit that there is a "falling off" at the end; nevertheless he supports the episode as having "a certain formal aptness." Mr. Eliot's approval is without serious qualification. He allows no objections, asserts that "it is right that the mood of the end of the book should bring us back to the beginning." I mean later to discuss their views in some detail, but here

[3] Mr. Eliot's essay is the introduction to the edition of *Huckleberry Finn* published by Chanticleer Press, New York, 1950. Mr. Trilling's is the introduction to an edition of the novel published by Rinehart, New York, 1948, and later reprinted in his *The Liberal Imagination*, Viking, New York, 1950.

[4] *Mark Twain At Work* (Cambridge, 1942), p. 92.

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it is only necessary to note that both critics see the problem as one of form. And so it is. Like many questions of form in literature, however, this one is not finally separable from a question of "content," of value, or, if you will, of moral insight. To bring *Huckleberry Finn* to a satisfactory close, Clemens had to do more than find a neat device for ending a story. His problem, though it may never have occurred to him, was to invent an action capable of placing in focus the meaning of the journey down the Mississippi.

I believe that the ending of *Huckleberry Finn* makes so many readers uneasy because they rightly sense that it jeopardizes the significance of the entire novel. To take seriously what happens at the Phelps farm is to take lightly the entire downstream journey. What is the meaning of the journey? With this question all discussion of *Huckleberry Finn* must begin. It is true that the voyage down the river has many aspects of a boy's idyl. We owe much of its hold upon our imagination to the enchanting image of the raft's unhurried drift with the current. The leisure, the absence of constraint, the beauty of the river—all these things delight us. "It's lovely to live on a raft." And the multitudinous life of the great valley we see through Huck's eyes has a fascination of its own. Then, of course, there is humor—laughter so spontaneous, so free of the bitterness present almost everywhere in American humor that readers often forget how grim a spectacle of human existence Huck contemplates. Humor in this novel flows from a bright joy of life as remote from our world as living on a raft.

Yet along with the idyllic and the epical and the funny in *Huckleberry Finn*, there is a coil of meaning which does for the disparate elements of the novel what a spring does for a watch. The meaning is not in the least obscure. It is made explicit again and again. The very words with which Clemens launches Huck and Jim upon their voyage indicate that theirs is not a boy's lark but a quest for freedom. From the electrifying moment when Huck comes back to Jackson's Island and rouses Jim with the news that a search party is on the way, we are meant to believe that Huck is enlisted in the cause of freedom. "Git up and hump yourself, Jim!"

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he cries. "There ain't a minute to lose. They're after us!" What particularly counts here is the *us*. No one is after Huck; no one but Jim knows he is alive. In that small word Clemens compresses the exhilarating power of Huck's instinctive humanity. His unpremeditated identification with Jim's flight from slavery is an unforgettable moment in American experience, and it may be said at once that any culmination of the journey which detracts from the urgency and dignity with which it begins will necessarily be unsatisfactory. Huck realizes this himself, and says so when, much later, he comes back to the raft after discovering that the Duke and the King have sold Jim:

> After all this long journey . . . here it was all come to nothing, everything all busted up and ruined, because they could have the heart to serve Jim such a trick as that, and make him a slave again all his life, and amongst strangers, too, for forty dirty dollars.

Huck knows that the journey will have been a failure unless it takes Jim to freedom. It is true that we do discover, in the end, that Jim is free, but we also find out that the journey was not the means by which he finally reached freedom.

The most obvious thing wrong with the ending, then, is the flimsy contrivance by which Clemens frees Jim. In the end we not only discover that Jim has been a free man for two months, but that his freedom has been granted by old Miss Watson. If this were only a mechanical device for terminating the action, it might not call for much comment. But it is more than that: it is a significant clue to the import of the last ten chapters. Remember who Miss Watson is. She is the Widow's sister whom Huck introduces in the first pages of the novel. It is she who keeps "pecking" at Huck, who tries to teach him to spell and to pray and to keep his feet off the furniture. She is an ardent proselytizer for piety and good manners, and her greed provides the occasion for the journey in the first place. She is Jim's owner, and he decides to flee only when he realizes that she is about to break her word (she cannot resist a slave trader's offer of eight hundred dollars) and sell him down the river away from his family.

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Miss Watson, in short, is the Enemy. If we except a predilection for physical violence, she exhibits all the outstanding traits of the valley society. She pronounces the polite lies of civilization that suffocate Huck's spirit. The freedom which Jim seeks, and which Huck and Jim temporarily enjoy aboard the raft, is accordingly freedom *from* everything for which Miss Watson stands. Indeed, the very intensity of the novel derives from the discordance between the aspirations of the fugitives and the respectable code for which she is a spokesman. Therefore, her regeneration, of which the deathbed freeing of Jim is the unconvincing sign, hints a resolution of the novel's essential conflict. Perhaps because this device most transparently reveals that shift in point of view which he could not avoid, and which is less easily discerned elsewhere in the concluding chapters, Clemens plays it down. He makes little attempt to account for Miss Watson's change of heart, a change particularly surprising in view of Jim's brazen escape. Had Clemens given this episode dramatic emphasis appropriate to its function, Miss Watson's bestowal of freedom upon Jim would have proclaimed what the rest of the ending actually accomplishes—a vindication of persons and attitudes Huck and Jim had symbolically repudiated when they set forth downstream.

It may be said, and with some justice, that a reading of the ending as a virtual reversal of meanings implicit in the rest of the novel misses the point—that I have taken the final episode too seriously. I agree that Clemens certainly did not intend us to read it so solemnly. The ending, one might contend, is simply a burlesque upon Tom's taste for literary romance. Surely the tone of the episode is familiar to readers of Mark Twain. The preposterous monkey business attendant upon Jim's "rescue," the careless improvisation, the nonchalant disregard for common-sense plausibility—all these things should not surprise readers of Twain or any low comedy in the tradition of "Western humor." However, the trouble is, first, that the ending hardly comes off as burlesque: it is *too* fanciful, *too* extravagant; and it is tedious. For example, to provide a "gaudy" atmosphere for the escape, Huck and Tom catch a couple of dozen snakes. Then the snakes escape.

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No, there warn't no real scarcity of snakes about the house for a considerable spell. You'd see them dripping from the rafters and places every now and then; and they generly landed in your plate, or down the back of your neck. . . .

Even if this were *good* burlesque, which it is not, what is it doing here? It is out of keeping; the slapstick tone jars with the underlying seriousness of the voyage.

Huckleberry Finn is a masterpiece because it brings Western humor to perfection and yet transcends the narrow limits of its conventions. But the ending does not. During the final extravaganza we are forced to put aside many of the mature emotions evoked earlier by the vivid rendering of Jim's fear of capture, the tenderness of Huck's and Jim's regard for each other, and Huck's excruciating moments of wavering between honesty and respectability. None of these emotions are called forth by the anticlimactic final sequence. I do not mean to suggest that the inclusion of low comedy per se is a flaw in *Huckleberry Finn*. One does not object to the shenanigans of the rogues; there is ample precedent for the place of extravagant humor even in works of high seriousness. But here the case differs from most which come to mind: the major characters themselves are forced to play low comedy roles. Moreover, the most serious motive in the novel, Jim's yearning for freedom, is made the object of nonsense. The conclusion, in short, is farce, but the rest of the novel is not.

That Clemens reverts in the end to the conventional manner of Western low comedy is most evident in what happens to the principals. Huck and Jim become comic characters; that is a much more serious ground for dissatisfaction than the unexplained regeneration of Miss Watson. Remember that Huck has grown in stature throughout the journey. By the time he arrives at the Phelps place, he is not the boy who had been playing robbers with Tom's gang in St. Petersburg the summer before. All he has seen and felt since he parted from Tom has deepened his knowledge of human nature and of himself. Clemens makes a point of Huck's development in two scenes which occur just before he meets Tom again. The first describes Huck's final capitulation to his own sense of right and

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wrong: "All right, then, I'll *go* to Hell." This is the climactic moment in the ripening of his self-knowledge. Shortly afterward, when he comes upon a mob riding the Duke and the King out of town on a rail, we are given his most memorable insight into the nature of man. Although these rogues had subjected Huck to every indignity, what he sees provokes this celebrated comment:

> Well, it made me sick to see it; and I was sorry for them poor pitiful rascals, it seemed like I couldn't ever feel any hardness against them any more in the world. It was a dreadful thing to see. Human beings can be awful cruel to one another.

The sign of Huck's maturity here is neither the compassion nor the skepticism, for both had been marks of his personality from the first. Rather, the special quality of these reflections is the extraordinary combination of the two, a mature blending of his instinctive suspicion of human motives with his capacity for pity.

But at this point Tom reappears. Soon Huck has fallen almost completely under his sway once more, and we are asked to believe that the boy who felt pity for the rogues is now capable of making Jim's capture the occasion for a game. He becomes Tom's helpless accomplice, submissive and gullible. No wonder that Clemens has Huck remark, when Huck first realizes Aunt Sally has mistaken him for Tom, that "it was like being born again." Exactly. In the end, Huck regresses to the subordinate role in which he had first appeared in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. Most of those traits which made him so appealing a hero now disappear. He had never, for example, found pain or misfortune amusing. At the circus, when a clown disguised as a drunk took a precarious ride on a prancing horse, the crowd loved the excitement and danger; "it warn't funny to me, though," said Huck. But now, in the end, he submits in awe to Tom's notion of what is amusing. To satisfy Tom's hunger for adventure he makes himself a party to sport which aggravates Jim's misery.

It should be added at once that Jim doesn't mind too much. The fact is that he has undergone a similar transformation. On the raft he was an individual, man enough to denounce Huck when Huck made him the victim of a practical joke. In the closing epi-

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sode, however, we lose sight of Jim in the maze of farcical invention. He ceases to be a man. He allows Huck and "Mars Tom" to fill his hut with rats and snakes, "and every time a rat bit Jim he would get up and write a line in his journal whilst the ink was fresh." This creature who bleeds ink and feels no pain is something less than human. He has been made over in the image of a flat stereotype: the submissive stage-Negro. These antics divest Jim, as well as Huck, of much of his dignity and individuality.[5]

What I have been saying is that the flimsy devices of plot, the discordant farcical tone, and the disintegration of the major characters all betray the failure of the ending. These are not aspects merely of form in a technical sense, but of meaning. For that matter, I would maintain that this book has little or no formal unity independent of the joint purpose of Huck and Jim. What components of the novel, we may ask, provide the continuity which links one adventure with another? The most important is the unifying consciousness of Huck, the narrator, and the fact that we follow the same principals through the entire string of adventures. Events, moreover, occur in a temporal sequence. Then there is the river; after each adventure Huck and Jim return to the raft and the river. Both Mr. Trilling and Mr. Eliot speak eloquently of the river as a source of unity, and they refer to the river as a god. Mr. Trilling says that Huck is "the servant of the river-god." Mr. Eliot puts it this way: "The River gives the book its form. But for the River, the book might be only a sequence of adventures with a happy ending." This seems to me an extravagant view of the function of the neutral agency of the river. Clemens had a knowledgeable respect for the Mississippi, and, without sanctifying it, was able to provide excellent reasons for Huck's and Jim's intense relation with it. It is a source of food and beauty and terror and serenity of mind. But above all, it provides motion; it is the means by which Huck and Jim move away from a menacing civilization. They return to the river to continue their journey. The river cannot, does not, supply purpose. That purpose is a facet of their conscious-

[5] For these observations on the transformation of Jim in the closing episodes, I am indebted to the excellent unpublished essay by Mr. Chadwick Hansen on the subject of Clemens and Western humor.

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ness, and without the motive of escape from society, *Huckleberry Finn* would indeed "be only a sequence of adventures." Mr. Eliot's remark indicates how lightly he takes the quest for freedom. His somewhat fanciful exaggeration of the river's role is of a piece with his neglect of the theme at the novel's center.

That theme is heightened by the juxtaposition of sharp images of contrasting social orders: the microcosmic community Huck and Jim establish aboard the raft and the actual society which exists along the Mississippi's banks. The two are separated by the river, the road to freedom upon which Huck and Jim must travel. Huck tells us what the river means to them when, after the Wilks episode, he and Jim once again shove their raft into the current: "It *did* seem so good to be free again and all by ourselves on the big river, and nobody to bother us." The river is indifferent. But its sphere is relatively uncontaminated by the civilization they flee, and so the river allows Huck and Jim some measure of freedom at once, the moment they set foot on Jackson's Island or the raft. Only on the island and the raft do they have a chance to practice that idea of brotherhood to which they are devoted. "Other places do seem so cramped and smothery," Huck explains, "but a raft don't. You feel mighty free and easy and comfortable on a raft." The main thing is freedom.

On the raft the escaped slave and the white boy try to practice their code: "What you want, above all things, on a raft, is for everybody to be satisfied, and feel right and kind towards the others." This human credo constitutes the paramount affirmation of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, and it obliquely aims a devastating criticism at the existing social order. It is a creed which Huck and Jim bring to the river. It neither emanates from nature nor is it addressed to nature. Therefore I do not see that it means much to talk about the river as a god in this novel. The river's connection with this high aspiration for man is that it provides a means of escape, a place where the code can be tested. The truly profound meanings of the novel are generated by the impingement of the actual world of slavery, feuds, lynching, murder, and a spurious Christian morality upon the ideal of the raft. The result is a tension which somehow demands release in the novel's ending.

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But Clemens was unable to effect this release and at the same time control the central theme. The unhappy truth about the ending of *Huckleberry Finn* is that the author, having revealed the tawdry nature of the culture of the great valley, yielded to its essential complacency. The general tenor of the closing scenes, to which the token regeneration of Miss Watson is merely one superficial clue, amounts to just that. In fact, this entire reading of *Huckleberry Finn* merely confirms the brilliant insight of George Santayana, who many years ago spoke of American humorists, of whom he considered Mark Twain an outstanding representative, as having only "half escaped" the genteel tradition. Santayana meant that men like Clemens were able to "point to what contradicts it in the facts; but not in order to abandon the genteel tradition, for they have nothing solid to put in its place." This seems to me the real key to the failure of *Huckleberry Finn*. Clemens had presented the contrast between the two social orders but could not, or would not, accept the tragic fact that the one he had rejected was an image of solid reality and the other an ecstatic dream. Instead he gives us the cozy reunion with Aunt Polly in a scene fairly bursting with approbation of the entire family, the Phelpses included.

Like Miss Watson, the Phelpses are almost perfect specimens of the dominant culture. They are kind to their friends and relatives; they have no taste for violence; they are people capable of devoting themselves to their spectacular dinners while they keep Jim locked in the little hut down by the ash hopper, with its lone window boarded up. (Of course Aunt Sally visits Jim to see if he is "comfortable," and Uncle Silas comes in "to pray with him.") These people, with their comfortable Sunday-dinner conviviality and the runaway slave padlocked nearby, are reminiscent of those solid German citizens we have heard about in our time who tried to maintain a similarly *gemütlich* way of life within virtual earshot of Buchenwald. I do not mean to imply that Clemens was unaware of the shabby morality of such people. After the abortive escape of Jim, when Tom asks about him, Aunt Sally replies: "Him? . . . the runaway nigger? . . . They've got him back, safe and sound, and

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he's in the cabin again, on bread and water, and loaded down with chains, till he's claimed or sold!" Clemens understood people like the Phelpses, but nevertheless he was forced to rely upon them to provide his happy ending. The satisfactory outcome of Jim's quest for freedom must be attributed to the benevolence of the very people whose inhumanity first made it necessary.

But to return to the contention of Mr. Trilling and Mr. Eliot that the ending is more or less satisfactory after all. As I have said, Mr. Trilling approves of the "formal aptness" of the conclusion. He says that "some device is needed to permit Huck to return to his anonymity, to give up the role of hero," and that therefore "nothing could serve better than the mind of Tom Sawyer with its literary furnishings, its conscious romantic desire for experience and the hero's part, and its ingenious schematization of life. . . ." Though more detailed, this is essentially akin to Mr. Eliot's blunt assertion that "it is right that the mood at the end of the book should bring us back to that of the beginning." I submit that it is wrong for the end of the book to bring us back to that mood. The mood of the beginning of *Huckleberry Finn* is the mood of Huck's attempt to accommodate himself to the ways of St. Petersburg. It is the mood of the end of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, when the boys had been acclaimed heroes, and when Huck was accepted as a candidate for respectability. That is the state in which we find him at the beginning of *Huckleberry Finn*. But Huck cannot stand the new way of life, and his mood gradually shifts to the mood of rebellion which dominates the novel until he meets Tom again. At first, in the second chapter, we see him still eager to be accepted by the nice boys of the town. Tom leads the gang in re-enacting adventures he has culled from books, but gradually Huck's pragmatic turn of mind gets him in trouble. He has little tolerance for Tom's brand of make-believe. He irritates Tom. Tom calls him a "numbskull," and finally Huck throws up the whole business:

So then I judged that all that stuff was only just one of Tom Sawyer's lies. I reckoned he believed in the A-rabs and the elephants, but as for me I think different. It had all the marks of a Sunday-school.

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With this statement, which ends the third chapter, Huck parts company with Tom. The fact is that Huck has rejected Tom's romanticizing of experience; moreover, he has rejected it as part of the larger pattern of society's make-believe, typified by Sunday school. But if he cannot accept Tom's harmless fantasies about the A-rabs, how are we to believe that a year later Huck is capable of awe-struck submission to the far more extravagant fantasies with which Tom invests the mock rescue of Jim?

After Huck's escape from his "pap," the drift of the action, like that of the Mississippi's current, is *away* from St. Petersburg. Huck leaves Tom and the A-rabs behind, along with the Widow, Miss Watson, and all the pseudo-religious ritual in which nice boys must partake. The return, in the end, to the mood of the beginning therefore means defeat—Huck's defeat; to return to that mood *joyously* is to portray defeat in the guise of victory.

Mr. Eliot and Mr. Trilling deny this. The overriding consideration for them is form—form which seems largely to mean symmetry of structure. It is fitting, Mr. Eliot maintains, that the book should come full circle and bring Huck once more under Tom's sway. Why? Because it begins that way. But it seems to me that such structural unity is *imposed* upon the novel, and therefore is meretricious. It is a jerry-built structure, achieved only by sacrifice of characters and theme. Here the controlling principle of form apparently is unity, but unfortunately a unity much too superficially conceived. Structure, after all, is only one element—indeed, one of the more mechanical elements—of unity. A unified work must surely manifest coherence of meaning and clear development of theme, yet the ending of *Huckleberry Finn* blurs both. The eagerness of Mr. Eliot and Mr. Trilling to justify the ending is symptomatic of that absolutist impulse of our critics to find reasons, once a work has been admitted to the highest canon of literary reputability, for admiring every bit of it.

What is perhaps most striking about these judgments of Mr. Eliot's and Mr. Trilling's is that they are so patently out of harmony with the basic standards of both critics. For one thing, both men hold far more complex ideas of the nature of literary unity than

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their comments upon *Huckleberry Finn* would suggest. For another, both critics are essentially moralists, yet here we find them turning away from a moral issue in order to praise a dubious structural unity. Their efforts to explain away the flaw in Clemens' novel suffer from a certain narrowness surprising to anyone who knows their work. These facts suggest that we may be in the presence of a tendency in contemporary criticism which the critics themselves do not fully recognize.

Is there an explanation? How does it happen that two of our most respected critics should seem to treat so lightly the glaring lapse of moral imagination in *Huckleberry Finn*? Perhaps—and I stress the conjectural nature of what I am saying—perhaps the kind of moral issue raised by *Huckleberry Finn* is not the kind of moral issue to which today's criticism readily addresses itself. Today our critics, no less than our novelists and poets, are most sensitively attuned to moral problems which arise in the sphere of individual behavior. They are deeply aware of sin, of individual infractions of our culture's Christian ethic. But my impression is that they are, possibly because of the strength of the reaction against the mechanical sociological criticism of the thirties, less sensitive to questions of what might be called social or political morality.

By social or political morality I refer to the values implicit in a social system, values which may be quite distinct from the personal morality of any given individual within the society. Now *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, like all novels, deals with the behavior of individuals. But one mark of Clemens' greatness is his deft presentation of the disparity between what people do when they behave as individuals and what they do when forced into roles imposed upon them by society. Take, for example, Aunt Sally and Uncle Silas Phelps, who consider themselves Christians, who are by impulse generous and humane, but who happen also to be staunch upholders of certain degrading and inhuman social institutions. When they are confronted with an escaped slave, the imperatives of social morality outweigh all pious professions.

The conflict between what people think they stand for and what social pressure forces them to do is central to the novel. It is present

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to the mind of Huck and, indeed, accounts for his most serious inner conflicts. He knows how he feels about Jim, but he also knows what he is expected to do about Jim. This division within his mind corresponds to the division of the novel's moral terrain into the areas represented by the raft on the one hand and society on the other. His victory over his "yaller dog" conscience therefore assumes heroic size: it is a victory over the prevailing morality. But the last fifth of the novel has the effect of diminishing the importance and uniqueness of Huck's victory. We are asked to assume that somehow freedom can be achieved in spite of the crippling power of what I have called the social morality. Consequently the less importance we attach to that force as it operates in the novel, the more acceptable the ending becomes.

Moreover, the idea of freedom, which Mr. Eliot and Mr. Trilling seem to slight, takes on its full significance only when we acknowledge the power which society exerts over the minds of men in the world of *Huckleberry Finn*. For freedom in this book specifically means freedom from society and its imperatives. This is not the traditional Christian conception of freedom. Huck and Jim seek freedom not from a burden of individual guilt and sin, but from social constraint. That is to say, evil in *Huckleberry Finn* is the product of civilization, and if this is indicative of Clemens' rather too simple view of human nature, nevertheless the fact is that Huck, when he can divest himself of the taint of social conditioning (as in the incantatory account of sunrise on the river), is entirely free of anxiety and guilt. The only guilt he actually knows arises from infractions of a social code. (The guilt he feels after playing the prank on Jim stems from his betrayal of the law of the raft.) Huck's and Jim's creed is secular. Its object is harmony among men, and so Huck is not much concerned with his own salvation. He repeatedly renounces prayer in favor of pragmatic solutions to his problems. In other words, the central insights of the novel belong to the tradition of the Enlightenment. The meaning of the quest itself is hardly reconcilable with that conception of human nature embodied in the myth of original sin. In view of the current fashion of reaffirming man's innate depravity, it is perhaps not surprising

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to find the virtues of *Huckleberry Finn* attributed not to its meaning but to its form.

But "if this was not the right ending for the book," Mr. Eliot asks, "what ending would have been right?" Although this question places the critic in an awkward position (he is not always equipped to rewrite what he criticizes), there are some things which may justifiably be said about the "right" ending of *Huckleberry Finn*. It may be legitimate, even if presumptuous, to indicate certain conditions which a hypothetical ending would have to satisfy if it were to be congruent with the rest of the novel. If the conclusion is not to be something merely tacked on to close the action, then its broad outline must be immanent in the body of the work.

It is surely reasonable to ask that the conclusion provide a plausible outcome to the quest. Yet freedom, in the ecstatic sense that Huck and Jim knew it aboard the raft, was hardly to be had in the Mississippi Valley in the 1840's, or, for that matter, in any other known human society. A satisfactory ending would inevitably cause the reader some frustration. That Clemens felt such disappointment to be inevitable is borne out by an examination of the novel's clear, if unconscious, symbolic pattern. Consider, for instance, the inferences to be drawn from the book's geography. The river, to whose current Huck and Jim entrust themselves, actually carries them to the heart of slave territory. Once the raft passes Cairo, the quest is virtually doomed. Until the steamboat smashes the raft, we are kept in a state of anxiety about Jim's escape. (It may be significant that at this point Clemens found himself unable to continue work on the manuscript, and put it aside for several years.) Beyond Cairo, Clemens allows the intensity of that anxiety to diminish, and it is probably no accident that the fainter it becomes, the more he falls back upon the devices of low comedy. Huck and Jim make no serious effort to turn north, and there are times (during the Wilks episode) when Clemens allows Huck to forget all about Jim. It is as if the author, anticipating the dilemma he had finally to face, instinctively dissipated the power of his major theme.

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Consider, too, the circumscribed nature of the raft as a means of moving toward freedom. The raft lacks power and maneuverability. It can only move easily with the current—southward into slave country. Nor can it evade the mechanized power of the steamboat. These impotencies of the raft correspond to the innocent helplessness of its occupants. Unresisted, the rogues invade and take over the raft. Though it is the symbolic locus of the novel's central affirmations, the raft provides an uncertain and indeed precarious mode of traveling toward freedom. This seems another confirmation of Santayana's perception. To say that Clemens only half escaped the genteel tradition is not to say that he failed to note any of the creed's inadequacies, but rather that he had "nothing solid" to put in its place. The raft patently was not capable of carrying the burden of hope Clemens placed upon it.[6] (Whether this is to be attributed to the nature of his vision or to the actual state of American society in the nineteenth century is another interesting question.) In any case, the geography of the novel, the raft's powerlessness, the goodness and vulnerability of Huck and Jim, all prefigure a conclusion quite different in tone from that which Clemens gave us. These facts constitute what Hart Crane might have called the novel's "logic of metaphor," and this logic—probably inadvertent—actually takes us to the underlying meaning of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Through the symbols we reach a truth which the ending obscures: the quest cannot succeed.

Fortunately, Clemens broke through to this truth in the novel's last sentences:

> But I reckon I got to light out for the territory ahead of the rest, because Aunt Sally she's going to adopt me and civilize me, and I can't stand it. I been there before.

Mr. Eliot properly praises this as "the only possible concluding

[6] Gladys Bellamy (*Mark Twain As a Literary Artist*, Norman, Oklahoma, 1950, p. 221.) has noted the insubstantial, dream-like quality of the image of the raft. Clemens thus discusses travel by raft in *A Tramp Abroad*: "The motion of the raft is . . . gentle, and gliding, and smooth, and noiseless; it calms down all feverish activities, it soothes to sleep all nervous . . . impatience; under its restful influence all the troubles and vexations and sorrows that harass the mind vanish away, and existence becomes a dream . . . a deep and tranquil ecstasy."

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sentence." But one sentence can hardly be advanced, as Mr. Eliot advances this one, to support the rightness of ten chapters. Moreover, if this sentence is right, then the rest of the conclusion is wrong, for its meaning clashes with that of the final burlesque. Huck's decision to go west ahead of the inescapable advance of civilization is a confession of defeat. It means that the raft is to be abandoned. On the other hand, the jubilation of the family reunion and the proclaiming of Jim's freedom create a quite different mood. The tone, except for these last words, is one of unclouded success. I believe this is the source of the almost universal dissatisfaction with the conclusion. One can hardly forget that a bloody civil war did not resolve the issue.

Should Clemens have made Huck a tragic hero? Both Mr. Eliot and Mr. Trilling argue that that would have been a mistake, and they are very probably correct. But between the ending as we have it and tragedy in the fullest sense, there was vast room for invention. Clemens might have contrived an action which left Jim's fate as much in doubt as Huck's. Such an ending would have allowed us to assume that the principals were defeated but alive, and the quest unsuccessful but not abandoned. This, after all, would have been consonant with the symbols, the characters, and the theme as Clemens had created them—and with history.

Clemens did not acknowledge the truth his novel contained. He had taken hold of a situation in which a partial defeat was inevitable, but he was unable to—or unaware of the need to—give imaginative substance to that fact. If an illusion of success was indispensable, where was it to come from? Obviously Huck and Jim could not succeed by their own efforts. At this point Clemens, having only half escaped the genteel tradition, one of whose pre-eminent characteristics was an optimism undaunted by disheartening truth, returned to it. *Why* he did so is another story, having to do with his parents and his boyhood, with his own personality and his wife's, and especially with the character of his audience. But whatever the explanation, the faint-hearted ending of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* remains an important datum in the record of American thought and imagination. It has been noted before, both by critics

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and non-professional readers. It should not be forgotten now.

To minimize the seriousness of what must be accounted a major flaw in so great a work is, in a sense, to repeat Clemens' failure of nerve. This is a disservice to criticism. Today we particularly need a criticism alert to lapses of moral vision. A measured appraisal of the failures and successes of our writers, past and present, can show us a great deal about literature and about ourselves. That is the critic's function. But he cannot perform that function if he substitutes considerations of technique for considerations of truth. Not only will such methods lead to errors of literary judgment, but beyond that, they may well encourage comparable evasions in other areas. It seems not unlikely, for instance, that the current preoccupation with matters of form is bound up with a tendency, by no means confined to literary quarters, to shy away from painful answers to complex questions of political morality. The conclusion to *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* shielded both Clemens and his audience from such an answer. But we ought not to be as tender-minded. For Huck Finn's besetting problem, the disparity between his best impulses and the behavior the community attempted to impose upon him, is as surely ours as it was Twain's.

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Report from India

SAUNDERS REDDING

LET ME GRANT AT THE START that three months in India is time enough for only limited observation and that judgments based on limited observation are open to question. But I do not pretend to know or write of all India or all Indians. Also, there are several factors which may somewhat offset the limitations of time.

First, the trip was an unusually extensive one. I made the circuit of India from Bombay on the west coast down to Trivandrum and up the east coast to Calcutta. Inland, I visited Poona, Hyderabad, Mysore, Bangalore, Guntur, Cuttack, Patna, dozens of university centers, and a considerable number of villages.

Second, my assignment put me in touch with a restricted segment of India's population—the university people and other professional intellectuals, especially writers and journalists. I also talked with a good many assorted political officeholders, from mayors and municipal councilors to chief ministers and chief secretaries of state. I had the opportunity for close observation in these groups, and because of their relative homogeneity, it was not necessary for me to make constant changes in my frame of reference. It is of these groups only that I report.

Third, I think it should be said that dozens of Indians told me that I was "one of them," that (obviously because of my color) I looked like a "Madrassi" or a "Bengali," that they felt "at home" with me. I was taken into dozens of Indian homes, some of them the most orthodox Hindu and Moslem homes, and treated with an intimacy that I have been told is most unusual for a Westerner. I think the significance of this is that my Indian hosts met me with their guards consciously lowered and free of the reticences with

✪ J. SAUNDERS REDDING, a member of the editorial board of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR and author of *They Came in Chains, Stranger and Alone* and *On Being Negro in America,* was asked by the American Grantees Section of the State Department to go to India and help to interpret American life to the Indian people.

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which they meet most Westerners. I think that in general my Indian friends and acquaintances spoke candidly and freely.

What follows is the truth as they see it.

The Indian people believe that the United States is imperialistic and that American designs in India are imperialistic. They are afraid of American "influence" and suspicious that America's various technical and other aid programs in India are methods of buying influence. "Why does America insist on sending experts to us?" was one of the questions I got from professional intellectuals and politicians time and again. "We have our own technical experts, trained in the West and some of them in America itself." The ex-Secretary General of the Congress Party said, "Why can't America give us aid and equipment and leave her advisors at home? The Indian people are suspicious of American advisors."

Though the Indian people accept the benefits of the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Fulbright program and the International Health Service Organization, they are suspicious of them as tools of imperialism. Among university students, this suspicion expresses itself heatedly: "A paltry fifty million dollars, and your country calls that aid!" said a student at Bombay, rising from the audience to ask a question but making a statement instead. "And do you know why only fifty million? To keep India always wanting and always dependent. The United States cannot buy India for a few lakhs of dollars, but she can keep India threatened with the necessity of dependence."

The chairman of the Municipal Council of Bezwada said to me, "We [the K. M. P. Party] are in disagreement with Mr. Nehru on his failure to recognize the danger in growing American influence in India."

Indians think that the war in Korea, which they invariably refer to as the "American war in Korea," was geared to American imperialism and that it was a cynical effort to provoke a third world war by means of which the United States hoped to fulfill her designs in Asia. The prevalence of this belief—this *conviction*—is frightening. When it was pointed out that the Korean action was not American but U. N. action and that India as a member of the U. N. was

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taking part in it, the reply was: "The U. N. is the tool of the Anglo-American Bloc."

Even the scholarship aid to Indian students for study in America was not infrequently labeled "imperialist guile." On the other hand, many Indian students took the opportunity to ask privately how such scholarship aid could be obtained. At Andhra University, where on India's Independence Day my visit was the occasion for half a dozen spontaneous anti-American speeches, I was aroused at 5:00 A.M. by the president of the University Union, who had made perhaps the bitterest speech of all. He wanted me to tell him how he should go about getting a scholarship to do higher study in America.

The Indian people believe that American policy is opposed to the "liberation and rise" of the colored peoples of the world, and that the treatment of Negroes in America is a home demonstration of this. The color question is linked with imperialism. No matter what the original subject of a conversation, my Indian acquaintances always managed to bring in the color question either on a political or a personal level.

"Why doesn't the United States recognize Red China?" This question came unexpectedly, and I had no ready answer. But I needed none, for the questioner gave his own answer: "Because the United States does not want to admit that nation of colored people into national equality with her." It did no good to cite the instances of India herself, the Philippines, Haiti, Liberia and Japan; for, excepting India, these were all "satellites" of America, and America was trying "to bring India into the same position."

The belief is that America is prejudiced against non-whites and that that prejudice, long documented in the disabilities under which Negroes suffer in the United States, is now expressed in American world policy. My Indian acquaintances contrasted the American billions given or loaned to Europe with the few millions disbursed in the East. They showed a great ignorance of the actual facts of race relations in the United States, and there was a strong resistance to being set right on the facts. Many times I had to dispute such absurd (but sincerely uttered) statements as this:

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"Negroes in the United States are lynched for looking at white women." Many times I was referred to a pamphlet hysterically titled *We Charge Genocide*, published by the American Civil Rights Congress; and often I listened in shocked silence to the most distorted emendations of facts—facts admittedly unhappy enough in themselves. In Bangalore, after a lecture to the Kannada Writers Association—a lecture, incidentally, that had nothing to do with race relations—a member of the audience rose to read from *We Charge Genocide*. "Is this true?" he challenged. In answer I tried to give a general account of race relations in America. When I had finished, I was told: "What you say does not convince us in the face of this!" He held up the pamphlet.

Always there was the implication and/or the declaration that American color prejudice is reflected in official American international policy, that our international relations reflect our domestic order.

In some instances, notably at Lucknow and Madras, I was told that some members of our technical aid groups are prejudiced against the Indians with whom they are supposed to work. Having perhaps some bearing on this was a question and a statement from the assistant director of the All India Radio station in Gauhati. "Isn't it unusual for your government to send a Negro out here? It is the general feeling in India that Negroes on assignment by your government are conspicuous by their absence." This is in line with the thinking that in America Negroes, and also Jews, no matter what their abilities, are not only looked down upon but purposefully kept down: "The American government confiscated Paul Robeson's wealth, threw Howard Fast and Leo Ginsberg in jail, and refused DuBois a passport." I did not know who Leo Ginsberg was.

The Indian people think that "Anglo-American" democracy is slow, that its methods are ineffective to meet an emergency, that India is in such an emergency and that, therefore, "Western" democracy is to be questioned as *the* way for India. They believe that the methods of democracy can be used and frequently are used to exploit and gull; that Western democracy is as much a cloak for the

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unscrupulous as it is a morality and a principle of action for the honest and forward-looking.

Their argument is that in India's present economic and emotional situation there is no time for delays: that land reform cannot wait, that the curbing of exploitation cannot wait, that the industrialization of India cannot wait, that the dissipation of caste distinctions cannot wait, and that Western democracy would delay these changes which are so immediately necessary. My Indian acquaintances pointed in the direction of Hyderabad State and Madras State, where I was told certain villages have had Communist revolutions and where land has been confiscated from the rich and given to the poor, the jemadars and moneylenders driven out, and the material welfare of the villagers increased. They have heard and they seem to believe that the Communists in China have accomplished in quick order exactly those things that cannot wait to be done in India. They have adopted a slogan, and it is heard everywhere: "Nobody starves in China. Everybody works, has land, or gets an education. Everybody is happy."

Since democracy (Western brand) is equated with capitalism in the minds of my Indian acquaintances, they charge both democracy and capitalism with delays, cynicism and exploitation. In effect, many Indians said: "Perhaps we should have a dictator here. We could get things done quickly. Afterwards we could get rid of him." The chief minister of an Indian state used almost these exact words to express what seems to be a fairly common thought. Associated with the thought is the belief that American democracy, especially as it expresses itself in politics and political rule, is corrupt. The Indians know of all the American political scandals from the Grant administration down to the "five percenters."

The Indians believe that eventually they can take the best from communism, the best from socialism and the best from democracy and create something better for themselves. They point to England as an example of a country where such an amalgam is (or was until recently) having success. They point particularly to Yugoslavia. The "social welfare state" plus "nationalization" plus "free enterprise" they believe to be a workable combination. They

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point to China, where, they believe, a "Communist democracy" has come into being. Indian professional intellectuals believe that some such "democracy" as China's can be brought into being in India.

The people of India believe that Soviet myth is not myth but indisputable truth—that inequalities have been completely abolished in Russia and China; that in these countries all are free and equal, except the convicted enemies of the state; that hunger and unemployment do not exist; that social crime has been abolished; that prosperity rules; that the fundamental freedoms are held sacred and sacredly defended against encroachment; that the very top Soviet leaders are honest, strong, infallible men, and that they want above all else peace for their country and for the world. These were common questions asked of me.

"Why does America want war with Russia?"

"Why does America not consider Russia's peace proposals?"

"Why does America reject the Russian proposal for control of atomic power?"

"Why does America refuse Russia's plan for disarmament?"

"Why do American publications tell lies about Russia and Red China?"

It seems obvious that the one thing common to all these beliefs, these "truths," as my Indian acquaintances see them, is that Communist propaganda supports all of them and dictates whatever modifications of them are necessary to serve the purposes of communism. There is a hard, solid core of communism in India. Perhaps it is not large, but it is definitely anti-American and anti-West; and, considering the segment of the population that harbors it—university professors, writers, journalists, politicians, and students who soon will be professors, et cetera—it is a danger to us. And contributing to this danger are two considerable factors.

First is the absolute dedication of the intellectuals to what seems to be an anti-American campaign. Their minds seem already closed to reasonableness and logic and to any word in the slightest complimentary to the United States and the West. They stick to distortions, untruths and misrepresented facts.

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Every university I visited had an organized Communist cell that held regular meetings and promoted and carried through regular programs. *But* in none of these universities was there a counter-group. In one district I was asked to meet with a group that was worried about the spread of communism at the university, and later I had a long conversation with the founder of the group. Here is a part of that conversation as I wrote it down immediately afterward:

"Do many university students and other young people belong to your group?"

"Not many. In fact, only myself and ———," he said. "You see, the Communists are so strong at the university and have such power that even those students who are not Communist, and who may even be anti-Communist, are afraid to associate themselves with us."

"But what power do Communist students have over non-Communist students?"

"Sir, I was not thinking of the power of the Communist students so much, though they have it in the Union and the various clubs and societies. I was thinking of the Communist faculty members."

"Are there many?"

"Yes, there are very many."

At Allahabad I met a similar small group of people who were worried by the increased Communist influence. They were led by Samar Sam and Rageshwar Singh. The group calls itself "The Writers and Artists Association." In Bombay there was a similar group, but I was told that these groups suffer because publishers and editors are pressured by the more powerful Communist-oriented groups. Certainly this much is true: R. K. Narayan and Mulk Raj Anand, both anti-Communist and both major Indian novelists, have resorted to foreign publication in the last five years.

Also a contributing factor to the danger to us is the seeming indifference to communism that one meets in official educational circles. I mentioned this to Dr. Harekrushna Mahtab, the ex-Secretary General to the Congress Party, and in addition to expressing the opinion that student communism is faculty directed, he told me a story illustrating official indifference. After being interrupted by heckling at a certain university, Dr. Mahtab said, he complained to

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the vice-chancellor and was laughed at. This happened three times in three different universities.

In a faculty group at a college in northern India, I was told by a young American instructor that the student Communist leader had told him that he had been directed to find or make a cause for a student strike. This information neither shocked nor aroused the Indian members of the faculty. A little over a week later, Indian newspapers carried stories of a student strike at the college.

Some writers and journalists are wavering precariously. I was informed by the secretary of a writers' group called the "Sandahya" that his group had come together principally for moral support, that various members of the group had been approached by the Communists offering considerable sums of money. Some had taken the offers.

Once I came to realize what was facing me in my contacts with professional intellectuals, I saw my job as an effort to sow seeds of doubt as to the validity of the false and distorted information they were getting about America and American democracy. The only way I saw to do this was to tell the absolute truth. I had to admit that democracy is sometimes tragically slow. I had to admit that race relations in America are bad, but I also pointed out that they are increasingly bettering. (Fortunately I had considerable documented information with me.) I pointed out that the right to petition for redress of grievances and that the right of minorities to sue and protest and work for reform were not abridged in the United States. I had to admit that the mammoth American news agencies tended to monopolies and that their power was a potential danger to freedom of opinion and expression. I had to admit that many American movies and books exported to India are cheap and vulgar, but I pointed out that they were not representative of American life, and that if there were no market in India for these cheap and vulgar misrepresentations, then they would not be exported for the consumption of the Indian people. (Radio Peiping got hold of this and spent two minutes blasting me for *insulting* the Indian people.)

The truth—and where possible, the truth backed with facts and

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figures—is not always immediately effective, as the Communist "big lie" has proved; but I have a hunch that in time—and surely there is still time?—the truth eventually wins.

I think what is needed is a concentration on two groups: the professional groups that should be sought out, encouraged, helped in a spirit of complete equality and friendship by visiting American writers, teachers and journalists; and the indecisive mass who, through our Information Service, should be shown more and more representative films, illustrated books and magazines and the like. We must bombard them with the truth, for in general even a bitter truth is more effective than apologies for it, and has greater impact than professions of abject shame.

For sincerity is another word. The insincere can lose us the friendship of India and of the whole Near East, and we sorely need that friendship, which cannot be bought. Those who do not believe in the equality of man and who are not themselves examples of it can lose us a struggle which, even for all our best technical and financial efforts, will remain for some time in doubt. The Indian people are not going to be fooled by any play-acting by Americans.

Until I went out to India, I had no idea that there was in me so great an urge to defend America or that there were so many dangerous untruths to defend her against. Until I went to India, communism simply made interesting reading in the newspapers. Though I am still unmoved by the foghorn rantings of certain American legislators, now I know that communism abroad offers more than a blow to American pride.

Everywhere I went in India, American Foreign Service personnel treated me with consideration and kindness far beyond the needs of official duty. There were no exceptions to this. The Indians too (and especially those who were my officially designated hosts and companions) were kind to me—perhaps too kind, for if they sometimes awakened me at 5:00 A.M. (and they did) to ask whether a change in the American administration would mean a change in American foreign policy, they also sometimes kept me up until the same hour listening to the sublime music and poetry of Tagore.

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Wild Geese

LAURA LAKE

In triangles the gathering geese fling through
The curve of heaven; their high metallic cries
Converge with shouts of skating children, climb
The windy horizontals of the sky.
Pulled by the promise of some Arctic April,
Trailing the salt of wild and lonely marshes
From quills conceived for thrust, they are compelled
To wing the planes of morning until they soar
Like lifting arrows to the sun's most northern shining.
White eagles watch from rims of mountain eyries,
While inner tension like a line of light
Draws the measurable base, defines the flight.

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The Flow of the River

LOREN C. EISELEY

IF THERE IS MAGIC ON THIS PLANET, it is contained in water. Its least stir even, as now, in a rain pond on a flat roof opposite my office is enough to bring me peeping and searching to the window. A wind ripple may be translating itself into life. I have a constant feeling that some time I may witness that momentous miracle on a city roof, see life, in fact, veritably and suddenly boiling out of a heap of rusted pipes and old television aerials. I marvel at how suddenly a water beetle has come and is submarining there in a spatter of green algae. Thin vapors, rust, wet tar and sun are an alembic remarkably like the mind; they throw off odorous shadows that threaten to take real shape when no one is looking.

Once in a lifetime, perhaps, one escapes the actual confines of the flesh. Once in a lifetime, if one is lucky, one so merges with sunlight and air and running water that whole eons, the eons that mountains and deserts know, might pass in a single afternoon without discomfort. The mind has sunk away into its beginnings among old roots and the obscure tricklings and movings that stir inanimate things. Like the charmed fairy circle into which a man once stepped, and upon emergence learned that a whole century had passed in a single night, one can never quite define this secret; but it has something to do, I am sure, with common water. Its substance reaches everywhere; it touches the past and prepares the future; it moves under the poles and wanders thinly in the heights of air. It can assume forms of exquisite perfection in a snowflake, or strip the living to a single shining bone cast up by the sea.

Many years ago, in the course of some scientific investigations in a remote western county, I experienced, by chance, precisely the sort of curious absorption by water, the extension of shape by

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osmosis, at which I have been hinting. You have probably never experienced in yourself the meandering roots of a whole watershed, or felt your outstretched fingers touching by some kind of clairvoyant extension the brooks of snow-line glaciers at the same time that you were flowing toward a gulf over the eroded debris of worn-down mountains. A poet somewhere has spoken of being "limbed . . . with waters gripping pole and pole." He had the idea, all right, and it is obvious that these sensations are not unique, but they are hard to come by; and the sort of extension of the senses that people will accept when they put their ear against a sea shell, they will smile at in the confessions of a bookish professor. What makes it worse is the fact that because of a traumatic experience in childhood, I am not a swimmer, and am inclined to be timid before any large body of water. Perhaps it was just this, in a way, that contributed to my experience.

As it leaves the Rockies and moves downward over the high plains toward the Missouri, the Platte River is a curious stream. In the spring floods, on occasion, it can be a mile-wide roaring torrent of destruction, gulping farms and bridges. Normally, however, it is a rambling, dispersed series of streamlets flowing erratically over great sand and gravel fans that are, in part, the remnants of a mightier ice-age stream bed. Quicksands and shifting islands haunt its waters; the bones of extinct beasts and the men who hunted them stir uneasily in its bed. Over it the prairie suns beat mercilessly throughout the summer. The Platte, "a mile wide and an inch deep," is a refuge for any heat-weary pilgrim along its shores. This is particularly true on the high plains before its long march by the cities begins.

The reason that I came upon it when I did, breaking through a willow thicket and stumbling out through ankle-deep water to a dune in the shade, is of no concern to this narrative. On various purposes of science I have ranged over a good bit of that country on foot, and I know the kind of bones that come gurgling up through the gravel pumps, and the arrowheads of shining chalcedony that occasionally spill out of water-loosened sand. On that day, however, the sight of sky and willows and the weaving net of water murmuring a little in the shallows on its way to the Gulf stirred me, parched

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as I was with miles of walking, with a new idea: I was going to float. I was going to undergo a tremendous adventure.

The notion came to me, I suppose, by degrees. I had shed my clothes and was floundering pleasantly in a hole among some reeds when a great desire to stretch out and go with this gently insistent water began to pluck at me. Now to this bronzed, bold, modern generation, the struggle I waged with timidity while standing there in knee-deep water can only seem farcical; yet actually for me it was not so. A near-drowning accident in childhood had scarred my reactions; in addition to the fact that I was a non-swimmer, this "inch deep river" was treacherous with holes and quicksands. Death was not precisely infrequent along its wandering and illusory channels. Like all broad wastes of this kind, where neither water nor land quite prevails, its thickets were lonely and untraversed. A man in trouble would cry out in vain.

I thought of all this, standing quietly in the water, feeling the sand shifting away under my toes. Then I lay back in the floating position that left my face to the sky, and shoved off. The sky wheeled over me. For an instant, as I bobbed into the main channel, I had the sensation of sliding down the vast tilted face of the continent. It was then that I felt cold needles of the alpine springs at my finger tips, and the warmth of the Gulf pulling me southward. Moving with me, leaving its taste upon my mouth and spouting under me in dancing springs of sand, was the immense body of the continent itself, flowing like the river itself, grain by grain, mountain by mountain, down to the sea. I was streaming over ancient sea beds thrust aloft where giant reptiles had once sported; I was wearing down the face of time and trundling cloud-wreathed ranges into oblivion. I touched my margins with the delicacy of a crayfish's antennae, and felt great fish glide about their work.

I drifted by stranded timber cut by beaver in mountain fastnesses; I slid over shallows that had buried the broken axles of prairie schooners and the mired bones of mammoth. I was streaming alive under the hot and working ferment of the sun, or oozing secretively through shady thickets. I *was* water and the unspeakable alchemies that gestate and take shape in water, the slimy jellies that under the enormous magnification of the sun writhe and whip upward as

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great barbelled cat mouths, or sink indistinctly back into the murk out of which they arose. Turtle and fish and the pin-point chirpings of individual frogs are all watery projections, concentrations, as man himself is a concentration, of that indescribable and liquid brew which is compounded in varying proportions of salt and sun and time. It has appearances, but at its heart lies water, and as I was finally edged gently against a sand bar and dropped like any log, I tottered as I rose. I knew once more the body's revolt against emergence into the harsh and unsupporting air, its reluctance to break contact with that mother element which still, at this late point in time, shelters and brings into being nine-tenths of everything alive.

As for men, those myriad little detached ponds with their own swarming corpuscular life, what were they but a way that water has of going about beyond the reach of rivers? I, too, was a microcosm of pouring rivulets and floating driftwood gnawed by the mysterious animalcules of my own creation. I was three-fourths water, rising and subsiding according to the hollow knocking in my veins: a minute pulse like the eternal pulse that lifts Himalayas and which, in the following systole, will carry them away.

Thoreau, peering at the emerald pickerel in Walden Pond, called them "animalized water" in one of his moments of strange insight. If he had been possessed of the geological knowledge so laboriously accumulated since his time, he might have gone further and amusedly detected in the planetary rumblings and eructations which so delighted him in the gross habits of certain frogs, signs of that dark interior stress which has reared sea bottoms up to mountainous heights. He might have developed an acute inner ear for the sound of the surf on Cretaceous beaches where now the wheat of Kansas rolls. In any case, he would have seen, as the long trail of life was unfolded by the fossil-hunters, that his animalized water had changed its shapes eon by eon to the beating of earth's dark millennial heart. In the swamps of the low continents, the amphibians had flourished and had their day; and as the long skyward swing, the isostatic response of the crust, had come about, the era of the cooling grasslands and mammalian life had come into being.

A few winters ago, clothed heavily against the weather, I wan-

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dered several miles along one of that same Platte's tributaries down which I had floated years before. The land was stark and ice-locked. The rivulets were frozen, and over the marshlands the willow thickets made such an array of vertical lines against the snow that tramping through them produced strange optical illusions and dizziness. On the edge of a frozen backwater, I stopped and rubbed my eyes. At my feet a raw prairie wind had swept the ice clean of snow. A peculiar green object caught my eye; there was no mistaking it.

Staring up at me with all his barbels spread pathetically, frozen solidly in the wind-ruffled ice, was a huge familiar face. It was one of those catfish of the twisting channels, those dwellers in the yellow murk who had been about me and beneath me on the day of my great voyage. Whatever sunny dream had kept him paddling there while the mercury plummeted downward and that Cheshire smile froze slowly, it would be hard to say. Or perhaps he was trapped in a blocked channel and had simply kept swimming till the ice contracted around him. At any rate, there he would lie till the spring thaw.

At that moment I started to turn away, but something in the bleak, whiskered face reproached me, or perhaps it was the river calling to her children. I termed it science, however—a convenient rational phrase I reserve for such occasions—and decided that I would cut the fish out of the ice and take him home. I had no intention of eating him. I was merely struck by a sudden impulse to test the survival qualities of high-plains fishes, particularly fishes of this type who get themselves immured in oxygenless ponds or in cut-off oxbows buried in winter drifts. I blocked him out as gently as possible and dropped him, ice and all, into a collecting can in the car. Then we set out for home.

Unfortunately, the first stages of what was to prove a remarkable resurrection escaped me. Cold and tired after a long drive, I deposited the can with its melting water and ice in the basement. The accompanying corpse I anticipated I would either dispose of or dissect on the following day. A hurried glance had revealed no signs of life.

To my astonishment, however, upon descending into the base-

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ment several hours later, I heard stirrings in the receptacle and peered in. The ice had melted. A vast pouting mouth ringed with sensitive feelers confronted me, and the creature's gills labored slowly. A thin stream of silver bubbles rose to the surface and popped. A fishy eye gazed up at me protestingly.

"A tank," it said. This was no Walden pickerel. This was a yellow-green, mud-grubbing, evil-tempered inhabitant of floods and droughts and cyclones. It was the selective product of the high continent and the waters that pour across it. It had outlasted prairie blizzards that left cattle standing frozen upright in the drifts.

"I'll get the tank," I said respectfully.

He lived with me all that winter, and his departure was totally in keeping with his sturdy, independent character. In the spring a migratory impulse or perhaps sheer boredom struck him. Maybe, in some little lost corner of his brain, he felt, far off, the pouring of the mountain waters through the sandy coverts of the Platte. Anyhow, something called to him, and he went. One night when no one was about, he simply jumped out of his tank. I found him dead on the floor next morning. He had made his gamble like a man—or, I should say, a fish. In the proper place it would not have been a fool's gamble. Fishes in the drying shallows of intermittent prairie streams who feel their confinement and have the impulse to leap while there is yet time may regain the main channel and survive. A million ancestral years had gone into that jump, I thought as I looked at him, a million years of climbing through prairie sunflowers and twining in and out through the pillared legs of drinking mammoth.

"Some of your close relatives have been experimenting with air breathing," I remarked, apropos of nothing, as I gathered him up. "Suppose we meet again up there in the cottonwoods in a million years or so."

I missed him a little as I said it. He had for me the kind of lost archaic glory that comes from the water brotherhood. We were both projections out of that timeless ferment and locked as well in some greater unity that lay incalculably beyond us. In many a fin and reptile foot I have seen myself passing by—some part of myself, that is, some part that lies unrealized in the momentary shape I

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inhabit. People have occasionally written me harsh letters and castigated me for a lack of faith in man when I have ventured to speak of this matter in print. They distrust, it would seem, all shapes and thoughts but their own. They would bring God into the compass of a shopkeeper's understanding and confine Him to those limits, lest He proceed to some unimaginable and shocking act, create perhaps, as a casual afterthought, a being more beautiful than man. As for me, I believe nature capable of this, and having been part of the flow of the river, I feel no envy any more than the frog envies the reptile or an ancestral ape should envy man.

Every spring in the wet meadows and ditches I hear a little shrilling chorus which sounds for all the world like an endlessly reiterated "We're here, we're here, we're here." And so they are, as frogs, of course. Confident little fellows. I suspect that to some greater ear than ours, man's optimistic pronouncements about his role and destiny may make a similar little ringing sound that travels a small way out into the night. It is only its nearness that is offensive. From the heights of a mountain, or a marsh at evening, it blends, not too badly, with all the other sleepy voices that, in croaks or chirrups, are saying the same thing.

After a while the skilled listener can distinguish man's noise from the katydid's rhythmic assertion, allow for the offbeat of a rabbit's thumping, pick up the autumnal monotone of crickets, and find in all of them a grave pleasure without admitting any to a place of pre-eminence in his thoughts. It is when all these voices cease and the waters are still, when along the frozen river nothing cries, screams or howls, that the enormous mindlessness of space settles down upon the soul. Somewhere out in that waste of crushed ice and reflected stars, the black waters may be running, but they appear to be running without life toward a destiny in which the whole of space may be locked in some silvery winter of dispersed radiation.

It is then, when the wind comes straitly across the barren marshes, and the snow rises and beats in endless waves against the traveler, that I remember best, by some trick of the imagination, my summer voyage on the river. I remember my green extensions, my catfish nuzzlings and minnow wrigglings, my gelatinous materializations

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out of the mother ooze. And as I walk on through the white smother, it is the magic of water that leaves me a final sign.

Men talk much of matter and energy, of the struggle for existence that molds the shape of life. These things exist, it is true; but more delicate, elusive, quicker than the fins in water, is that mysterious principle known as "organization," which leaves all other mysteries concerned with life stale and insignificant by comparison. For that without organization life does not persist is obvious. Yet this organization itself is not strictly the product of life, nor of selection. Like some dark and passing shadow within matter, it cups out the eyes' small windows, or spaces the notes of a meadow lark's song in the interior of a mottled egg. That principle, I am beginning to suspect, was there before the living in the deeps of water.

The temperature has risen. The little stinging needles have given way to huge flakes floating in like white leaves blown from some great tree in open space. In the car, switching on the lights, I examine one intricate crystal on my sleeve before it melts. No utilitarian philosophy explains a snow crystal, no doctrine of use or disuse. Water has merely leaped out of vapor and thin nothingness in the night sky to array itself in form. There is no logical reason for the existence of a snowflake any more than there is for evolution. It is an apparition from that mysterious shadow world beyond nature, that final world which contains, if anything contains, the explanation of men and catfish and green leaves.

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Ghost Writing and History

ERNEST R. MAY

NOT TOO LONG AGO topical indexes contained the reference: "Ghost Writing—see Forgery"; now the searcher is referred instead to "—Authorship; Collaboration."

Ghost writing, once a shady second cousin of plagiarism, has lately come into its own. Busy public men have found that by hiring ghost writers to hack out their letters, speeches and books, they can obtain leisure for philosophy and politics. Moreover, ghost writing performs a social service. By doubling and tripling the number of documents each official signs, ghost writing provides employment not only for writers but also for stenographers, printers, mailmen, archivists and librarians. If ghost writing were not bipartisan, one might think of it as an extension of the WPA.

There are, however, some valid objections to ghost writing. An obvious one is that the voter may get from ghost-written speeches or letters a false impression of a candidate or public officer. But an extension of this, and an objection not so obvious, is that the same false impressions may pass into history; and if history is made up of many such false impressions, the lessons it teaches to future generations are likely to be misleading.

History is written from the testimony of firsthand observers—from their diaries, letters, speeches and autobiographies. Historical truth cannot depend on secondhand interpretation any more than justice can depend on hearsay. And a ghost-written diary, letter, speech or autobiography is secondhand testimony, the ghost writer's interpretation of what his employer said or thought.

Historians who describe and interpret the last forty years have plenty of material to work with, but not much of it is authoritative and firsthand. Diaries are still reliable because diary entries are

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usually too personal to be entrusted to ghost writers. And fortunately the diary custom has not died out: witness the recent publication of extracts from the diaries of Henry L. Stimson, James Forrestal, Senator Vandenberg, and Joseph C. Grew. But even diaries have felt the ghost writer's alien hand. Colonel House and Forrestal, for example, sometimes dictated notes and allowed secretaries to fill them out into diary entries. The House and Forrestal diaries, however, are exceptions. Most diaries are reliable firsthand sources, but they usually form the smallest part of a period's historical records.

Letters, speeches and memoirs exist in larger bulk, and our contemporaries leave behind them mountains of such records. A single member of Congress requires eight or ten stenographers to maintain his correspondence. In spite of talk that oratory is a dying art, speeches are uttered and printed in incredible number. And the writing of an autobiography seems to have become a supplementary duty of public service. Anyone who has entered the White House at an hour other than sightseers' hours feels compelled to publish his impressions. In recent years books have been produced by Presidents' guards, ushers, secretaries, even ghost writers; and the reminiscing of retired civil servants seems not to have missed a single executive department. Most of these apparent sources, however, are spurious or unreliable. Though signed by one man, they were written by someone else.

To use speeches, letters and memoirs of this kind for the reconstruction of a man's thoughts is impossible unless the man's own contribution can be winnowed from what his ghost writer added. The choice and order of words in Jefferson's writings enabled Adrienne Koch and others to rebuild and portray his pattern of thinking, but for contemporary public figures similar analysis is practically impossible. If, on the basis of letters and speeches, a scholar should try to analyze Franklin Roosevelt's mind, he would emerge with a figure made up of Roosevelt and the fragments of Roosevelt's ghosts—Rosenman, Sherwood, Michelson, Grace Tully, Missy Le Hand, even the sprightly apparition of Harold Ickes. The only dependable keys to Roosevelt himself would have to be the documents which the President wrote by hand, for any type-

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written text would automatically be open to immediate question.

Examples could be taken from any era to show how ghost-written sources have built an impenetrable thicket around the truth. Two generations of scholars have quarreled about the meaning of Washington's Farewell Address, simply because no one knows whether Washington himself or Alexander Hamilton was its author. Between the Quarantine Address of 1938 and the Yalta Declaration, one wanders through a maze of undecided questions concerning Roosevelt's foreign policies.

But to use as an example a point that is not enmeshed in either academic or newspaper controversy, take Ray Stannard Baker's interpretation of Woodrow Wilson's "neutrality in thought" proclamation of August 18, 1914. In his biography of Wilson, Baker takes several pages to analyze the motives behind this proclamation, and he uses it as a key document for the interpretation of Wilson's World War attitudes. With the proclamation as his only source, Baker wrote: "The President . . . saw that neutrality might easily degenerate into mechanical and external observances, cynically challenged by partisans of both sides. What he desired was a sincere neutrality, a genuine suspension of judgment, in the hope that the United States might serve as first friend in the interest of peace."

A later exploration of the State Department archives, however, turned up the original draft of this proclamation in the handwriting of Robert Lansing, with changes and notations by Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan. All the words and phrases of the proclamation, save one sentence relating to America's desire to mediate the war, were written by Lansing and Bryan. Therefore, if any character is revealed in the words of this proclamation, it is that of Lansing or perhaps that of Bryan. Certainly it is doubtful that Wilson's innermost thoughts appeared in words which he merely approved.

Happily, this is a rare instance in Wilson's records, and instances of this kind are rarer still in the records of most of his predecessors. But in recent years, especially since 1933, the problem of authorship and meaning occurs at every turn. The result is that truth-seeking historians can locate only the driest and most obvious facts. It is certain only that a letter was written on a certain date or that a

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speech was given. In some cases it may even be doubtful that a document was read and approved by the man who signed it. No cautious, critical historian can pretend to read a man's thoughts or feelings in what someone else wrote for him; and without the thoughts and emotions of its characters, history becomes precisely the tedious, useless chronology that undergraduates already think it is.

Even memoirs can no longer be read as expressions of individual character and thinking. It has always been true that autobiographies were poor sources for fact. Attainment of the age of reminiscence is in itself virtual proof that the memory is clouded. The true utility of memoirs lies in the opinions and attitudes they express, the trains of thought they recapture, and the images of mind which men reflect only when they begin to contemplate and rationalize their own experiences. But to a memoir written by one man for another, little or none of this value attaches.

The ghost-written memoir is usually accurate in its facts because the ghost writer has done the historian's job of verifying, but the opinions expressed are secondhand, sometimes even fabricated. Thoroughly ghost-written autobiographies differ from "official" or "authorized" biographies only in using the first person instead of the third. Their only usefulness comes from the fact that what they say has been approved by the man or his family.

A number of recent autobiographies have been hybrids, the results of collaboration between the one reminiscing and a ghost writer. The memories are original, but the organization and polish are the ghost writer's. These are not entirely secondhand, like thoroughly ghost-written autobiographies, but neither are they straight firsthand accounts.

Important collaborative memoirs like Stimson's and Cordell Hull's cannot be ignored by historians, but they have to be used with the greatest caution. All of Stimson's *On Active Service in Peace and War,* except direct quotations, was written by McGeorge Bundy; and part of Hull's lengthy *Memoirs* was written by Andrew Berding and various State Department experts. In both books there is important firsthand material, but it is inextricably mingled with the hearsay testimony of secondhand observers. And there is no

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way to tell whose minds the order and composition of the books reflect.

If Bundy or Berding kept stenographic records of their interviews with Stimson and Hull, the manuscripts of these interviews will be worth far more than the books to future historians. On the Wilson era there is no more valuable source than the records which Ray Stannard Baker kept of his interviews with Wilson's associates, and historians can hang to the hope that modern ghost writers, collaborators and biographers are similarly scrupulous and diligent.

Even among collaborative memoirs there are levels of difficulty. Walter Muir Whitehill's *Fleet Admiral King: A Naval Record*, for example, is a fusion of two firsthand accounts. Part of the book was written by King, part by Whitehill, who served throughout the war on King's staff. And in the book's World War II narrative, it is sometimes difficult to tell what was actually seen by the commander in chief of the fleet and what was merely glimpsed by Whitehill from the Admiral's outer office. Had Nicolay and Hay collaborated with Lincoln on a memoir, the resulting book would have been more valuable as a source than the biography which the two secretaries did compose. But the problem of discriminating between points of view would be a plague on every Lincoln scholar.

What is happening to historical evidence would happen to legal evidence if courts were to accept the testimony of several people as the testimony of one eyewitness. If the answers to a court's questions were prepared by the attorneys and friends of a witness, the result would be the kind of testimony that historians writing of our time will have to use. In 1950, the Supreme Court ruled against the admissibility of ghost-written speeches and documents, describing ghost writing as "the custom of putting up decoy authors to impress the guileless." On evidence that courts reject, historians have to depend in their search for truth.

Despite a few examples from the distant past, ghost-written sources form a major problem only for the historian of the past two decades. The pace of modern life seems to account for the current dependence on ghost writers and collaborators. Even after World War I, individuals had the leisure to write their own memoirs, perhaps because the generals and politicians of that day

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were not kept in public life. Lloyd George, Asquith, Grey, Poincaré, Clemenceau and Salandra; all the members of Wilson's wartime cabinet; Pershing, Sims, Robertson, Jellicoe, Ludendorff, von Falkenhayn and von Tirpitz—all these seem to have written for themselves. Only Joffre, whose waking moments were barely enough for animal needs, had to have a collaborator. Perhaps representative of this earlier age is the case of First Sea Lord Fisher, who being unable by reason of temperament to produce a connected memoir, merely published his unedited ebullitions and jottings.

As a matter of fact, the use of ghost writers and collaborators seems to be an American custom, though there is an English example of the genre in Admiral Cunningham's *A Sailor's Odyssey*. Among European works, only Canevari's *Graziani mi ha detto* and Laval's diary correspond to the type of war memoir being furnished by Americans. With the added source material turned up by the Nuremberg inquiries, it will be possible for the wartime history of Europe to be written with thoughtful understanding. But the true history of the United States for the same period may already be as lost as the true story of the fall of Troy.

In our country the practice of using ghost writers and collaborators is so common as to raise doubts concerning even the books in which collaborators are not named. That a publisher should see fit to blazon advertisements of *Crusade in Europe* with the statement "Written by Eisenhower himself!" carries alarming implications, and the historian's fears were hardly allayed last year when he saw the amazement with which newspapers reported that Governor Stevenson wrote his own speeches. The rule that seems to be proved by these two exceptions may be enough in itself to drive American historians back into the colonial period or else into writing busty fiction.

The condition, of course, is not without its inborn correctives. Ghosts, being writers, sometimes write under their own names. The volumes by Michelson, Sherwood, Tully and Rosenman will help to untangle the sources for the Roosevelt era, and this may be a tradition in the making. At least, such is the hope held out by Jonathan Daniels' writings on the Truman administration. The

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oral autobiographies elicited by Congressional committees are first-rate source material for historians. Though as liberals, scholars may deplore events like the MacArthur inquiry, they can revel later in its records. Also, many ghost writers and collaborators are themselves historians, and there is hope that a sense of professional responsibility will move them to keep records of their work for the use of future students.

These, however, are merely palliatives. It is not the ghost writers, but their employers who are the culprits and victims in this conspiracy against history. Even if the literary profession should rebel against ghost writing, there would always be an unscrupulous fringe with the moral attitude of the Manhattanite who recently pleaded, "If I didn't sell dope to these kids, somebody else would." The practice will be stopped only at its source and only if the men who employ ghost writers can be brought to realize how their immortality will suffer from the practice.

In the confused and clouded sources for contemporary history, conscientious historians cannot get hold of the protoplasm which they need to bring their characters to life. The sharp outlines of present-day public men are wrapped and obscured in the opaque winding sheets of their ghosts. Conscientiously written histories can recite only dull and lifeless facts, while romantic histories portray fictional characters made not of whole cloth but of many samples—patchwork quilts of people. Perhaps the best hope for future history lies in the possibility that public men may realize that they submerge in their forged records the very individuality which their ambition seeks to make immortal.

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HUNGER OR PLENTY FOR THE FUTURE?

Kirtley F. Mather

Almost all of the persons who have given intelligent thought to the question "Hunger or plenty for the future?" are agreed upon certain basic premises. The population of the earth has been increasing at an unprecedented rate since the beginning of the twentieth century. The supply of food that can be won from the earth by methods now in use is limited. If the population continues to increase at the current rapid rate, that limit will be reached within a few score years. Except for a few years during and immediately following World War II, food production has increased at about the same rate as that by which the population has increased; to be specific, the per capita food supply in 1953 is at least as satisfactory as it was in the 1930's. Food supplies have always been inadequate, however; and what food has been available has been unevenly distributed, so that only a small fraction, at present less than one-third, of the earth's inhabitants have adequate nourishment, while the larger fraction go hungry. If peace and plenty (they go together) are to be enjoyed by all mankind, there must be proper adjustment between the number of people occupying the earth and the resources available to sustain them.

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Although such statements are widely accepted as true, the interpretations placed upon them and the inferences drawn from them vary almost as widely. This leads to prognostications for the future of mankind ranging all the way from utter hopelessness to irresponsible optimism. My own view might best be labeled one of restrained optimism. I believe that consideration of these predictions focuses attention upon the greatest challenge man confronts, and that it is a challenge which *can* be met victoriously. Whether it is so met depends upon human intelligence and good will. Failure to win the victory will be due not to the limitations of nature, but to the ignorance, stubbornness or selfishness of men.

The current rate of population increase is a unique phenomenon in the history of mankind. It is like a tidal wave that arises only to subside. To project into the future the recent over-all increases of population in any country is quite fallacious. Since the turn of the century, medical research has greatly lengthened the average span of life. Millions of men and women in their sixties are now alive who would have long since been dead were it not for modern sanitation, public health measures, and medical or surgical treatment that was unavailable a century ago. It is, however, the lethal diseases of infancy, youth and early

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maturity that have largely been conquered. Diseases of old age are still almost as obdurate as they have always been. The decline in death rates has advanced the average age of the inhabitants of all technologically progressive communities. But this trend must inevitably reach its limit. In spite of all that medical science can do, death rates will increase before long among such communities. We here in America, for example, will soon be "taking up the slack" resulting from the recent lengthening of our average life span.

Wise demographers understand this perfectly. Their prognostications are not based upon total population statistics of recent years, nor upon a comparison of crude death rates with crude birth rates. Instead, they compute the net reproductive rate, if the data for doing so are available. Most significant among the necessary data is the ratio between the number of female children born during a year to the number of women aged 15 to 45 living that year. In every country for which this computation can be made for the last fifty years or so, there is evident a general trend toward a stable population, rather than one that will continue to increase far into the future. This is especially notable in Western Europe, the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada. Data are inadequate for any precise determination of the changes in the net reproductive rate during the last half-century in the countries inhabited predominantly by non-Caucasian peoples.

About all that can be said is that since 1900 the colored races have made considerable progress toward attaining the white man's death rate. In that advance, the medical missionaries and the philanthropic foundations' doctors from the United States have lent an efficient helping hand. Progress toward attaining the white man's birth rate has been appreciable but much less rapid. Consequently, for the next few decades the colored peoples will increase in number more rapidly than the white. But the many complex and often subtle factors in human nature that bear upon reproductivity seem to be essentially the same, regardless of the pigmentation of the skin. In time—three or four decades for some communities, six or eight for others—the balance between fertility and mortality among colored peoples will presumably be similar to that among white people.

It is quite unrealistic to take, for example, the recent percentage growth of the population of India and project it into the future, with the warning that within a century a billion Indians will be jostling one another for food. By the same token, it is altogether fallacious to suggest that continuance of medical missions and further indoctrination of the people of India and Egypt with modern techniques of public health will permit them suddenly to acquire the low death rate of the United States, with a resulting "population explosion" that would have dire consequences. The trend of the recent past is far more likely to continue. Gradually the death rate will continue to decline; and at the same time the birth rate, lagging somewhat behind, will be reduced.

Without going into the technicalities of birth control—or "planned parenthood," as we in Massachusetts prefer to call it—or of the psychological and sociological factors that influence the birth rate in various communities, certain significant correlations may be noted. There is an almost perfect inverse correlation between the birth rate and the per capita consumption of pig iron among the nations. The higher the consumption of pig iron—i.e., the greater the mechanization of industry, agriculture and commerce—the lower the birth rate. Similarly, there is an almost perfect correlation between literacy and birth rate. The higher the percentage of illiteracy in a nation, the higher the birth rate.

If, then, we are interested in reducing the birth rate among overcrowded peoples and thus hastening the stabilization of population in such countries as India, China, Java and Puerto Rico, the method to be followed is clearly evident: assist the inhabitants of those countries to accelerate their progress toward mechanization of industry, agriculture and commerce, and help them in their efforts to reduce illiteracy.

There is good reason to expect that the

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world's net reproductive rate will be appreciably lower by the end of the century than it is at present. In the meantime, the goal for the joint task force of scientists, technicians, economists and politicians should be a standard of living everywhere at a level adequate to promote social and political stability in a free and democratic society. That is quite different from attempting to provide an American diet and an American standard of living for all people everywhere. To sharpen our thinking as we turn to the next of my "basic premises," I would suggest that this goal may involve as many as 4 billion people, by some unpredictable date in the first half of the twenty-first century.

Is an adequate supply of food for a population of 4 billion within the limits of what can be won from the earth by methods now in use? An affirmative answer would mean that food production can be increased to appreciably more than twice its present total. If that is to be done, more acres must be brought under cultivation; the yield must be increased on the acres already being used; the depredations of insects, rodents, and plant and animal diseases must be reduced; and conservation of soil, water and food supplies must be more effectively practiced.

Although less than a tenth of the land area of the globe is now under cultivation, that is nearly all the easily cultivated land there is. The only large areas that can conceivably be added to the present food-producing acreage are the deserts, the frigid zones of the Far North, and the hot, humid jungles in the vicinity of the Equator. The prospect these lands offer is not especially enticing. Something more is required than merely a man with a plow. Reclamation by means of reservoirs and irrigation canals, even deep wells and storage cisterns, requires expert engineers and geologists, hydrographers and meteorologists. Recalcitrant soils can be productively tilled only if expertly managed by soil scientists and agronomists. Large investments of capital and labor must be made, and economics rears its lovely head to demand an adequate return for materials and energy expended. But if the pressure of expanding population and the demands of ill-fed people for their fair share of the earth's bounty are sufficiently insistent, at least a billion acres of productive land may well be added to the earth's soil factory. Enough has been accomplished in the last twenty-five years to carry us past the stage of speculation and demonstrate man's creative ability in the face of almost every obstacle that nature places in his way.

A hundred years ago, about 2½ acres of productive land were required, on the average, to provide nourishment for each human being. Today, men are actually cultivating only about 1½ acres for each person now alive. Yields per acre have increased greatly, yet the potential yields are still far greater than the actual. The best techniques, with the best seeds and strains of livestock and with optimum fertilization and most suitable farm machinery, are being applied to only a small fraction of the tilled acres. Merely to extend to all the cultivated lands of the earth, through education and the sharing of materials and experiences, the soil management practices and the methods of breeding of plants and animals now in vogue on the acres of highest yield would vastly increase the foodstuffs available for the nourishment of mankind.

New varieties of hybrid corn produce 100 bushels with no more land, labor, equipment or fertilizer than were needed to grow 60 bushels from the best seed available in 1900. New strains of wheat yield 110 bushels per acre instead of 50 or 60. New varieties of rice are now available that double the yield per acre of this widely used staple food. And the geneticists working in this area of economic botany have by no means reached the end of their road. Research is continuing toward the development of food-producing plants best adapted to the soils and climatic conditions of different localities and best able to withstand the depredations of pests and disease. Thus, yields are being greatly increased from acres already under cultivation, with no greater expenditure of labor and materials than before. The goal of such an average yield of foodstuffs that one acre will support one

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person throughout all the lands of the globe is definitely in sight.

At present, no nation has developed its food-producing potential to the full. Land-management is both a science and an art. As a science it is still in its infancy. It is undeniably true that for generations we have been "plundering the earth" in many places, probably more disastrously in the United States than in any other country. But we now know how to correct the mistakes of the past and to conserve rather than to destroy the earth's farmlands. In this connection it should be noted that no one nation has a monopoly of knowledge. The terraced hillside agriculture of Peru and the basin agriculture of Africa long antedated contour plowing in the Mississippi Valley.

What has been said about increasing the yield of cereals and other foodstuffs from land now under cultivation is applicable also to the livestock that provides a large fraction of the nourishment of many people. Breeding for increased yield of eggs, milk or meat per animal is nothing new, but recent application of scientific knowledge of genetics and such techniques as artificial insemination is producing results of well-nigh revolutionary nature. Equally important is the recently acquired knowledge concerning animal diseases, and the application of such remedies as the new antibiotics to their eradication. The potentialities for increased food supplies, with no increase in herds or flocks, are literally stupendous.

All of which is to say that the limits to the supply of food that can be won from the earth are highly elastic. Research and education, diffusion of knowledge and sharing of materials can push those limits outward farther than man can now foresee. In fact, they are now determined, and will continue to be determined far into the future, by man himself, rather than by the geography and climatology of the earth.

As things now stand, the technical problems to be surmounted if there is to be "plenty for the future" have already been solved, or at the very least are well along toward solution. The physical and biological scientists have rendered noble service toward human welfare. They can be counted upon for new achievements in the more distant future, when new sources of food, such as that potentially available in the unmeasured resources of the oceans, may be required. Unlike other creatures, man has the power and responsibility to determine his own destiny as an inhabitant of the earth. Proper adjustment between human populations and their environment is technically possible.

In the last analysis, the answer to our question will be determined by those responsible for the political and economic relations within the world-wide family of human beings. Ideals of morality and ethics are at least as important as the ideas that arise in research laboratories. Mother Earth is rich enough to nourish every man in freedom, but it is by no means certain that enough men, and especially enough influential men, have sufficient knowledge and adequately beneficent motivation to take wise advantage of her bounty. It is solely for this reason that my optimism for the future is restrained.

Stanley A. Cain

The problem the world faces that is embodied in the question "Hunger or plenty for the future?" has a new dimension. It is not a new question, for people have faced it in all ages, but it has a new dimension in the interrelatedness of people's problems the world around. Throughout much of man's history, his food supply has been precarious; and hunger, sickness, starvation

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and death have provided the solution for the imbalance between food and people. Considering the whole history of man, and all of man today, it is a relatively recent phenomenon and a restricted one that he has been able to produce consistently an abundance of food. A whole concatenation of circumstances accounts for the comparatively abundant life of the people who have had the longest experience with the Industrial Revolution and its concomitant benefits.

If we are to have any measure of the problem of adequately feeding the people of the world, certain facts should be clear. Famine and surpluses need no longer exist side by side in adjacent provinces, for communication and transportation can overcome the disparities. In addition, there is a more general, although far more universal, social-consciousness that provokes people who can to do something to alleviate food shortages where they occur. Even these, however, are not simple matters like a Christmas basket for a poor cousin. Unfortunate and needy people may not be able to purchase food, obtain credit, or even pay for the transport of food that is a gift.

These problems of distribution do not go to the heart of the matter. There is more to it than whether an equitable distribution of present food production would be adequate to feed the people of the world. In fact, it is completely unrealistic to add up the people of the world and the world's production or productive acres and make any conclusion about the capacity of the world to feed its people. We do not and never will feed from a single trough. Although there are some possibilities of world-wide distribution of basic, luxury, and protective foods and their derivatives—and it is an accomplished fact to a degree—food security is first of all a local matter, and only in diminishing importance is it regional, national and international. The answer to whether there is hunger or plenty in the future will of necessity find some of its data in the resources, conditions, practices, policies and perhaps good fortune of nations, although international matters affecting trade—such as war, depression, austerity, exchange, competition, technological advance, politics—will certainly be influential. The business of people being able to feed themselves is fundamentally, though not entirely, a local matter.

The next fact to be considered is that within recent decades there are more people, many more people, making demands on the world's productive capacity. Although I hasten to add that this productive capacity is not static—being influenced favorably by a whole series of cultural attributes that can be learned through science, technology, business, government—the capacity of people to make the earth yield useful products wages a losing struggle with the capacity of people to increase their numbers. Human fertility, of course, is not a new phenomenon. The phenomenon that is new is the influence on the death rate of the benefits of even a little medicine, public health, and sanitation.

For example, in Crete the crude death rate in 1938 was 11.9, while in England it was 11.6. In Crete the birth rate remains comparatively high, and the population is growing much faster than England's. Crete is 80 per cent agricultural, little different from what it was a millenium ago. Another example is Ceylon, a small country of 7¼ million people, which is growing, since the control of malaria by DDT, at the rate of 200,000 per annum, or 2.7 per cent, enough to double the population in a generation.

Until the common sense of man generally is adequate to recognize that his operation on the death rate alone, with complete disregard of the birth rate, can result only in explosive population growth and the pressing of more mouths against the inadequate, drying breasts of the earth, there can be no satisfactory answer to the question "Hunger or plenty for the future?" The answer can only be what it often has been and for many people now is: "Hunger."

The third fact to be considered is that man has learned an impressive amount about increasing the production of food and other useful commodities. This knowledge is not universal, but it is known by

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many specialists: agronomists, soil scientists, water engineers, geneticists, pathologists, entomologists and conservationists. It has been learned by many farmers, and it can be taught to others. There are scarcely any systems of agriculture in the world today that cannot be improved by existing knowledge, and a tremendous majority of the world's food-producing acres are yielding only a meager harvest in comparison with that which is potential. It would seem, then, on the face of it, a relatively simple matter for those with "know-how" to go about the world transferring this precious skill to others and, in short order, causing the "deserts to bloom" and nature's bounty to be realized everywhere. A corollary of this third fact is that in recent years people generally are dreaming of improving their lot—a new dream for most people—and that nations are striving valiantly, through Point Four, the Colombo Plan and the United Nations, to assist this dream.

Let us ask ourselves in all earnestness, "What are the chances?" The programs and agencies mentioned above are new, originating in the last decade. Are there any experiences of longer duration to judge by? Tannous recalls for us that the Ottoman government planned and applied a comprehensive land reform during the second half of the nineteenth century. It was a direct attack on the prevailing feudal system. He says, "The grave land tenure problem . . . is still today the major and basic issue in most of the countries of that region. If it has changed any [after several decades], it is only in the direction of becoming more acute and explosive." Balfour, Evans, Notestein and Taeuber, making a study of southeast Asia, came to the conclusion that despite the "advantages" provided colonial people by the British, Dutch and others—after a century or more of some contact with industrialization, centralized government, improved communication and transport, public health and sanitation, and education—it was impossible to demonstrate that the people generally were any better off than they were before. It has been characteristic that an increase of 15 per cent in rice production, for example, has been counterbalanced by an even greater population increase. The Colombo Plan of the British Commonwealth will this July complete three years of a six-year plan to raise the living standards of the 580 million people of southeast Asia through a 5-billion-dollar co-operative effort. A part of the Colombo Plan in Ceylon is the Gal Oya multi-purpose river valley development project, estimated to cost around 84 million dollars. It will bring under cultivation a new area of 100,000 acres. This is impressive and sounds encouraging until one remembers that this equals one-half acre per person for the population increase of Ceylon added each year, and that during the period of development of Gal Oya more people will have been added to Ceylon's runaway population than the new acres can adequately feed.

Space does not permit us, nor is it useful, to multiply discouraging examples of the difficulties of improving levels of living. Common men in nearly every part of the world are aspiring to a better life. They are willing to work toward desirable goals, or can be encouraged to do so, and are willing to accept assistance, if not under duress. On the other side, many nations are in the mood to help. Let us look, then, more closely at the nature of the problem.

On completion of the detailed Rockefeller Foundation survey of Crete as a case study of an underdeveloped area, Allbaugh concluded that if food production is to be increased, certain health measures are necessary to decrease the toll of disease; the supply of water must be increased; and there must be a variety of aids to production so that output per acre is increased. However, the greatest needs are not on the individual farms. There must be developed an adequate transport of surplus food to the markets, involving roads, perhaps railroads and coastwise shipping, warehouse and port facilities, et cetera. Most important of all, market outlets must be found, and these are singularly sensitive to conditions of international trade. These are conditions of importance for increasing food production in Crete. Allbaugh's list does not represent the full complexity of the general problem,

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the details of which vary from country to country.

In many places there is a basic need for changes in the patterns of land ownership and parcel distribution. The land reform which is going forward in Japan, the Philippines, India, Egypt and Italy is often thought of, and may even consist only of, subdivision of large holdings and the consolidation of scattered, fragmentary parcels into more efficiently workable units. But a longer experience in Iraq and Mexico, for example, shows that manipulation of patterns and ownership alone results in little, if any, increases in food production and may, in fact, diminish the over-all supply of food. For land reform to be successful, a number of other measures are necessary. The change from feudalism requires numerous economic, social and political changes. There must be clear and unequivocal title to land and property. The opportunity of ownership must be real, which means accessible credit over a reasonable length of time at fair rates of interest. Contracts must be clear and defensible in accessible courts. Assistance must be available, usually from the government, to the individual or to co-operatives for the purchase of seed, fertilizer, implements and other agricultural needs, and for the transport, storage, processing and marketing of products.

And yet, improvement of the economic processes for the farmer contributes little to the goal of significant increases of food production unless many other things happen to him and his society. The farmer must be assisted in increasing his productivity by having access to advanced agricultural methods. And access alone is not enough: he usually must be persuaded to change his ways, to try out the new methods. In most of the world there is a great need for agricultural extension service, for the activities of men like our county agents and farm planners, who take information to the individual farmer and combine "show-how" with "know-how." But the problems are different everywhere, and behind these agents must be a corps of scientists working on basic problems such as geology, soils, land capability, diseases, and plant and animal breeding; and a corps of technologists translating science into practical local agriculture, testing fertilizers, insecticides, new strains and varieties, methods of erosion control, planting and cultivating. These are the three phases: research, the application of basic knowledge, and its dissemination among the people. The methods of science and its laws and principles are universal, knowing no boundaries of race, language or politics. The techniques of using science, however, are not directly transferable; and the techniques of extension, of working with people, are usually not at all transferable from one culture to another, except as they are based on universal human qualities.

Increased food production depends also upon certain general changes in the rural society. These include education in many respects. Native intelligence may be good and acuity in the context of the familiar society may be high, as they usually are, yet the learning of new concepts—political, social and economic, as well as agricultural —may come slowly. Often diet must be improved, especially in protective foods, fats and proteins. Medical care, public health, and sanitation must be improved if the agricultural worker and his family are to make the land yield at a significantly higher level.

These functions of government, at least in part, cost money. Taxes must be imposed. They should be equitable and in relation to the ability to pay. They must be collected and disbursed without favor. Unbridled graft, corruption and misgovernment are inimical to rising levels of living.

One of the prevailing characteristics of farm labor in most low-economy countries is its underemployment (although perhaps not of the farm wife). The equivalent of 150-175 eight-hour days is perhaps the usual annual employment in farming in underdeveloped countries with high population pressure. This wasted time, under favorable circumstances, can be used on community road construction, irrigation and drainage, terracing and other useful benefits to the community's level of living. Where it is possible, gains can be made

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when self-sufficient farm families undergo some specialization and division of labor. This may start in home and village industries, especially those using native materials and simple tools and machines, and spread to services as the purchasing power increases. Although large hydroelectric developments, also providing flood control and irrigation, are often needed and sometimes feasible, people should not be encouraged in the false expectancy of jumping from feudal peasantry to the atomic age in a decade.

Finally, there must be a positive population policy. The government and the people must recognize that uncontrolled reproduction makes more difficult, and apparently in many cases impossible, a favorable answer to the question "Hunger or plenty for the future?"

This is a pessimistic commentary, but not completely so. Failure in our efforts will attend us only if we see the problems in little pieces, only if we try to transplant the tissue of our culture into the foreign body of another. We will fail if we try to do things to people instead of to help them help themselves. We will fail if they are afraid and believe us to have ulterior motives, if they believe we are economic imperialists building a new empire.

We will not fail if we seek help in the problem from social scientists, resource generalists, and conservationists, in addition to technologists of all kinds. If all overseas agents are armed not only with good intentions and a high order of competence, but also with humility, patience, respect for the strange-seeming beliefs and ways of others, a knack for seeing interrelations, adaptability and ingenuity, we have a chance. These technical assistants must also understand democracy, believe in it, and be able to explain it—but not to "sell" it. Then the chances will be even better for success.

These lessons have been learned, but not yet by enough people in both high and low places.

Earl Parker Hanson

In all societies and throughout history, two classes of major prophets have raised their voices at times of crisis and fearful tension. The one announces, angel-Gabriel fashion, that the world is about to end in a blaze of destruction, the other that it is about to do nothing of the kind. Neither knows precisely what he is talking about, since human affairs are always far more complex than is the scholarship which dissects and analyzes human affairs. The first, however, is more dramatic; the second, safer. It is obvious that, in a long string of prophets of imminent world-destruction, only the last can possibly be right—and when he is proved right, he won't be around to enjoy the fruits of his victory. By the same token, only the last of the prophets of survival can possibly be wrong—all the rest *must* be right. All of which means that social man is a far tougher, more complex, more creative, more ingenious, more inventive animal than much of our scholarship and many of our scholars give him credit for being. It also means that when our scholarship leads us to an inevitable conclusion of imminent destruction, it is always the scholarship and not mankind which is intellectually bankrupt.

In recent years it has been alarmingly fashionable to pay attention to the neo-Malthusian prophets of doom, whose major theme seems to be that the world is too full of ignorant foreigners who, perversely enough, refuse to practice either birth control or soil conservation for the purpose of safeguarding our American standards of

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living, which they have never been permitted to taste. Hence, according to William Vogt, our American standards of living are in grave danger; and we must now, for the purpose of preserving them, force the world's "spawning millions" to limit their births and preserve their vanishing soils as prerequisites for any help toward the improvement of their own standards of living.

It is true, of course, that both populations and birth rates are alarmingly high in the world's present and former colonial areas, suffering from various kinds of exploitative colonialism. Overpopulation, however, can be measured only in terms of poverty, not in terms of densities. It is never a land which is overpopulated in terms of inhabitants per square mile; it is always an economy, in terms of inhabitants per square meal. A poor society, moreover, denied the capital for modern mechanization and the political structure which makes the acquisition of that capital possible, must rely on a plentiful supply of cheap but inefficient human labor for its very survival—and the poorer the soil becomes, the more people are needed for scratching a bare living out of it. Therefore poor societies don't take to birth control, which appears to them to be a means for their destruction through robbing them of their labor force.

It is true that the world now needs far more foodstuffs than it has produced formerly, as well as a more equitable distribution of those foodstuffs, and that modern agricultural practices such as soil conservation are glaringly needed in virtually all parts of the world. But sound agricultural practices, including conservation, are functions of high standards of living, requiring in any one society the investment of much capital—government as well as private—for research, transportation, marketing, financing, education, and the all-important integration of agriculture with industrial processing of various kinds. A poor, overpopulated society has neither the capital nor the means for acquiring it.

The key to our modern salvation, therefore, is found in the ubiquitous social revolution in which the people of Asia, Africa, Latin America and Oceania are demanding the opportunity to create higher standards of living for themselves. It is only when people have the means—and the political freedom to acquire those means—that they can possibly improve their agriculture and conserve their soils. By the same token, it is only when people no longer need their children as cheap labor, when they begin to think of buying shoes for them and thereby strengthening their industrial structure, when they think of paying rent for them in decent housing, of sending them to school and eventually to college, that they also begin to think realistically in terms of having fewer.

The key to our modern salvation is found not in the mournful wailing of the neo-Malthusian Jeremiahs with their mechanistic sixth-grade arithmetic, but in Point Four of Truman's inaugural speech, which was regarded by hundreds of millions of people outside of the United States as the most important single statement made by a statesman in modern times. It is found in the vast Colombo Plan for the economic development of southeastern Asia through raising local standards of living. It is found in the energetic programs for development being started in Pakistan and India, and in the fact that in such countries, discussion of improved agriculture and birth control is heard everywhere because they are regarded as integral parts of the current vast and complex struggle for salvation in the capitalist world. It is found in Kwame Nkrumah's astonishing Gold Coast, where dozens of children gather nightly under every village street lamp to study their lessons in a terrible thirst for modern education, which in turn will permit modern development. It is found in the ubiquitous movements for political emancipation from the former exploitative colonialism under which the wealth of the colonies went to improve standards of living in the ruling countries rather than in the colonies—in India's independence; in Ceylon's dominion status; in the Gold Coast's headlong advance toward dominion status; in Puerto Rico's recent liberation from its former colonial status into that of a common-

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wealth, independent in its internal affairs, but sharing the far broader independence of the American union of which it is a part.

On January 2, 1949, in his first inaugural speech as Puerto Rico's first elected governor, Muñoz Marín gave the key to our modern salvation when he said that "colonialism is obsolete and is disappearing rapidly from the face of the earth." What he implied was that not only the people of Puerto Rico, but also the people of India, Africa and—with such notable and degrading exceptions as the Union of South Africa—all the rest of the former colonial world are now achieving the means, the powers and the incentives whereby they can improve their productivity, raise their standards of living, and make soil conservation and the reduction of birth rates not only possible but socially desirable as well.

Puerto Rico is, in fact, a microcosm and a social laboratory of world importance, which demonstrates a world-wide trend under which the conservationists and the excitable demographers are now being demoted from their position as prophets—spreading a pessimism which is extremely dangerous because it leads to fatalistic inaction—and are being placed in their proper position as valuable technicians, whose specialized knowledge can be bought for specialized purposes by the societies which have achieved the means for buying it and the social incentives for applying it.

Since 1950, and even while the neo-Malthusians kept using Puerto Rico as their most cherished example of social doom caused by racial improvidence coupled with "senseless proliferation," upward of one thousand students, observers and technicians from all the "underdeveloped" parts of the capitalist world, from all of Latin America, all the non-Communist parts of Asia, most parts of Africa, and some parts of Oceania, have visited Puerto Rico in a steady procession and an organized program to study for themselves the means by which a former "stricken" society can pull itself up by its bootstraps—granted the political power to do so—with relatively few means and in a remarkably short time. The Puerto Rican example is having a profound influence for the better throughout the world, even while Radio Moscow, with antiquated facts, inverted facts, invented "facts," or no facts at all, keeps using the island as the world's most awful example of America's postulated imperialistic greed. Writing in 1953 about the astonishing transformation by which Puerto Rico even now has disproved the Malthusians, Rexford Tugwell goes so far as to call that transformation "one of the wonders of human history."

Not because it is unique, but precisely because it indicates what can happen and has begun to happen throughout the miserable "underdeveloped" world of a billion people on our side of the Iron Curtain, it is important to realize that since 1940 Puerto Rico, by its own efforts, has: (1) greatly extended its power network and added 225 new industries to its productive plant; (2) made strong headway in the diversification, modernization, and augmented production (going hand in hand with great strides in conservation) of its agricultural plant; (3) increased its per capita income from $122 to $399 (in 1952), or to $212 in terms of 1940 prices, and made strides in the improved distribution of that income; (4) created one of the best public health services in the hemisphere and reduced its death rate to a figure comparable to that of the continental United States, with a further reduction in sight which promises soon to give Puerto Rico the world's lowest death rate; (5) expanded its educational system to the point where illiteracy will soon be wiped out, and taken drastic steps toward reshaping it to fit the island's modern needs; (6) extended that great impetus to all classes of Puerto Ricans, to the point where thousands are today "civically employed" and are giving their thoughts and labor to the task of directly improving their lives and those of their children, instead of expecting their government to do everything for them.

All this was impossible under the island's former colonial status, but inevitable under the modern political emancipation, achieved through fair and democratic means and as a matter of mutual convenience in

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collaboration between San Juan and Washington.

For the purpose of our inquiry, the behavior of Puerto Rico's birth rate is of paramount importance. In 1940, it was 39 per 1,000. By 1948, during the early years of the great upward spiral, it rose to 41. That was to be expected. From 1948 to 1952, however, it has gone down to 35.17—not because the Puerto Ricans had read the prophets of doom, but because they had created conditions under which a lower birth rate was socially desirable and possible. This downward trend continues, with no end in sight.

As the people of Puerto Rico produced more to eat than formerly, by easier means, they also began to produce fewer Puerto Ricans to share the food. As they produced more "surplus" values through which to expand their education, as more Puerto Ricans were taught the importance of a sense of responsibility toward their children, as they saw the desirability of sending those children to school instead of using them as cheap labor, as they acquired schools to which they were able to send their children, they also began to have fewer children. As farm practices were improved, introducing machinery with which a few can now do the work of many, as unemployed farmers therefore moved to the cities to seek work in the growing industrial plant, as they realized all the disadvantages of large families in cities, they began to reduce their birth rate. At the same time, and while soil conservation practices are spreading rapidly, the value of the island's agricultural production has increased from $84,000,000 in 1940 to $227,874,000 in 1952.

The prophets of doom talk constantly about our limited *and dwindling* agricultural resources. It has recently become fashionable to claim that man needs 2.5 acres of arable land per capita for his food-security, and that the world is coming dangerously close to that point. That, again, is special mechanistic pleading of the worst kind. The amount of land needed per capita has been reduced constantly since man was in the gathering stage of culture. It was reduced through the hunting stage, the nomadic stage, by the introduction of plant agriculture as we know it, and is still being reduced yearly through numerous technical improvements and innovations.

Within the first thirty-five years after the United States took over Puerto Rico, introducing modern methods in the sugar industry, the island's sugar output multiplied tenfold, while the area planted to sugar was only trebled. Today, Puerto Rico can yearly produce more sugar on less land because of the availability of capital and modern methods. It is known even now that Puerto Rico, with less than half an acre of arable land per person and with much of that given to sugar, can be virtually self-sustaining in foodstuffs, when foodstuffs-agriculture has the same capitalization, credit, transportation, processing facilities, marketing facilities which are now a virtual monopoly of sugar.

In India, Pakistan, Africa and many parts of South America, the question is far less one of how much arable land is available than one of how well that arable land is used in accordance with modern methods of agriculture, *integrated with all the other activities of a modernized society.* The fact that all those societies are today beginning to modernize and industrialize themselves means precisely that their agriculture will be improved toward greatly augmented production—while their birth rates promise to go down as higher standards of living are achieved.

It has long been known, moreover, that in famine-stricken China, millions of acres lay idle which were well suited to extensive (as opposed to intensive) agriculture of the kind that is found in our Middle West. What was needed was railroads to tap those vast areas, tractors for working them, fertilizers, and the like, plus a new industrial plant to create and maintain those railroads, tractors and fertilizer factories. China is here mentioned only as an example, however. The same condition exists in Africa and many parts of South America, while the enormous meat-producing potentialities of the arctic and subarctic have not been tapped—except perhaps in Soviet Siberia. Just as many parts of our Midwest have

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been lifted through modern means out of their former status as the "great American desert," so modern political and economic trends promise soon to abolish vast academic deserts in many other parts of the world.

José de Castro may well be much nearer the mark than are the pessimists when he states that there are today available to the world—granting the availability of means for applying up-to-date processes—no fewer than *eight* acres of potentially arable land per world inhabitant. De Castro, as Executive Director of the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization, is not a voice to be shouted down.

To the scientific and technical progress that is made every year in agriculture should be added the sea's vast resources for food, which we have barely begun to use. Scientists have already made excellent butter out of seaweed, and proteins out of algae and yeast which are actually being sold for a few cents per pound. Such processes, now naturally opposed by the dairy and meat industries, can go far toward reducing still further the amount of land needed per capita for sustaining the human race. Again, however, the development of such processes implies the social, economic, political and industrial world revolution which is now actually in process.

The pleading of the neo-Malthusians is founded on the odd concept of a static world, and seems calculated to preserve the world's present status quo. But the world is not static, and never was; the status quo which exists as I write this will no longer exist when it is published.

As some German poet wrote: "Where danger lies, there also grows the saving power."

Karl Sax

Primitive man led a precarious life. The high birth rates necessary for the survival of the human species were nearly balanced by high death rates. As late as the Bronze and early Iron Ages, the expectancy of life in Greece was probably less than twenty years. The English anthropologist Sir Arthur Keith has estimated that the total world population could not have exceeded 20 million people before the advent of agriculture.

The introduction of agriculture some eight or ten thousand years ago was the first step toward higher living standards and a modern civilization. With primitive tools powered by human or animal energy, most of man's time was spent in obtaining his food supply. Only in the flood plains of the great river valleys was it possible to maintain a productive and permanent agriculture and release manpower for other activities. It was not by accident that the early centers of civilization were developed in the valleys of the Tigris, the Euphrates and the Nile.

Even with an expanding agriculture, populations grew slowly, and it was not until the sixteenth century that the world population reached 500 million. During the past three hundred years the human population has grown at an unprecedented and accelerating rate. It is now approaching 2,500 million and is increasing at the rate of slightly more than 1 per cent annually—a rate which would double the present population in less than seventy years. During the next decade the world must produce food for at least 250 million more people—a population greater than that of all of North and Central America. Yet nearly two-thirds of the world's people now live little above subsistence levels with inadequate food, shelter or medical care. In most of the world any increase in food production has been used to support more people without materially increasing living standards.

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Only the people of western Europe, North America and Oceania have essentially completed their demographic transition—the transition from an agrarian culture with high birth rates, high death rates and low living standards to an industrial culture with low birth rates, low death rates and relatively high living standards. Considerable progress has been made by the people of eastern and southern Europe, the U.S.S.R., Japan and Argentina. The people of Asia, Africa and most of Latin America have hardly started their transition.

It is often assumed that the undeveloped countries of the world can escape from poverty and hunger by following the paths of escape used by the Western nations, but some of these paths are no longer open to the people of Asia, Africa and Latin America. When the countries of western Europe began their transition at the end of the eighteenth century, they were not densely populated. For many decades they enjoyed an industrial monopoly which permitted the export of machinery and other products in exchange for food and raw materials. The frontiers of the New World provided space for surplus populations and a source of food imports. Today the New World contains about as many people of European origin as do the mother countries of Europe. Several European countries are still dependent upon imports for much of their food. Without the New World, it is doubtful if the countries of Europe could have completed their demographic transition.

Western Europe began the transition with relatively high birth and death rates. Death rates declined more rapidly than did birth rates, and the population grew rapidly for many decades before low death rates were balanced by low birth rates. The population of Europe increased nearly threefold, and the people of European origin increased nearly sixfold. Yet during most of the transition, death rates were relatively high compared with present death rates, and population growth seldom exceeded 1.5 per cent annually. Modern medicine can reduce death rates to less than 15 per 1,000 of population even in an overpopulated and undeveloped country. With uncontrolled birth rates of 40-45 per 1,000, modern control of the death rate could result in a population growth of 3 per cent annually—as it has in Mexico, Ceylon and Puerto Rico during recent years. Rapid population growth during the early phases of the transition cycle is the greatest obstacle to higher living standards in most of the world.

The transition in North America was relatively easy. With ample agricultural and industrial resources, it was possible to support a rapidly growing population at ever higher living standards. Birth rates in the United States were reduced to little more than replacement levels before World War II. The recent increase in the birth rate is due in part to early marriages stimulated by war prosperity, but if economic conditions deteriorate, the birth rate will decline. An important factor in providing ample food for the 50 million people added to our population between 1920 and 1950 was the release of 70 million acres of land formerly used to supply hay and grain for horses and mules. During the past decade, crop yields were increased nearly 30 per cent because of more than doubled fertilizer consumption and unusually favorable weather; but during the past few years, production has leveled off.

Most of the countries which have started their demographic transition should have no great difficulty in raising living standards and reducing birth rates in accord with resources if they could look forward to a peaceful world. With the aid of the industrialized nations, most of the undeveloped countries in Africa and South America might be able to increase agricultural and industrial production rapidly enough to avoid excessive population growth, but little aid can be expected so long as there is war or threat of war among the major nations of the world.

The situation in Asia appears to be hopeless. Half of the world's people live in Asia, but they live little above subsistence levels. In most areas population density is high, and there is not enough arable land to provide adequate food for more than the present population. Little new land can be brought into cultivation. Industrialization

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could aid agriculture by producing fertilizer, transportation, storage facilities, farm machinery, insecticides and fungicides, but it could not provide large food imports as it did in Europe. Few countries have surplus food in amounts needed for Asia, and the rest of the world will also become industrialized and can make its own industrial products.

There is no new world to absorb the surplus population of Asia. It would be very difficult to transport India's annual increase of 5 million people, and even more difficult to induce the rest of the world to welcome such numbers of immigrants. If modern death rates could be established, the surplus population of Asia might well exceed 30 million each year. Emigration offers no hope for relieving population pressure in Asia.

Even with a borrowed industrial culture, it is improbable that any country can complete its demographic transition with less than a threefold increase in population growth. Japan's population grew from about 30 million in 1870 to 80 million in 1950, and is still growing rapidly. Modern medicine has made it possible to reduce death rates rapidly, but perhaps new inexpensive oral contraceptives will also reduce the birth rate more rapidly.

The only possible solution of Asia's population problem is some new inexpensive source of food and energy or a very rapid decline in the birth rate. It is possible that the new frontiers of science can provide new sources of food. J. D. Bernal, the eminent English chemist, has proposed the conversion of coal, limestone and air into food which could support a population thousands of times the present number; but we are not told what we shall use for food when the coal supply is depleted. If the world's per capita consumption of coal for power and heat were raised to the level of that of the United States, the world's coal reserves, accumulated by nature over a period of several hundred million years, would be exhausted in less than five hundred years.

A somewhat more realistic possibility of new sources of food is the culture of algae in shallow troughs of water containing the essential mineral elements and the optimum amount of carbon dioxide. The major obstacle is the cost. Based upon pilot plant tests made by A. D. Little, Inc., the total cost is estimated at about $.27 per pound of dry algae or about $.55 per pound of protein. Soybeans can be produced for about $.03 per pound or about $.09 per pound in terms of protein. High costs mean much labor; and if most of man's time must be spent in growing food, he would not be much better off than his primitive ancestors, who spent most of their time hunting for their next meal. Perhaps new strains of Chlorella or some other algae will be found which will be more efficient; but unless costs can be greatly reduced, the culture of algae will not solve the food problem.

If it were possible to increase greatly the world's food supply by orthodox agriculture, algae farming, or chemical synthesis, it would still be necessary to control the birth rate. Even the most fantastic increases in food production could not possibly keep pace with a population resulting from an uncontrolled birth rate and a modern death rate. If the people of Massachusetts, for example, could maintain the birth rates of 1800 and the death rates of 1950, the population would equal that of the United States in one hundred years, and exceed that of the entire world in two hundred years; and in less than five hundred years there would not be standing room for all on the entire surface of the earth. Population growth must be controlled either by low birth rates or by high death rates. Yet in Massachusetts we are told that "birth control is against God's law."

The only possible solution of the population problem in Asia, and in most of the rest of the world, is the rapid reduction of the birth rate. These people cannot wait for the slow diffusion of means and motives which led the people of the Western nations to adopt contraceptive techniques. The control of the birth rate must be included in the public health and educational programs of the various countries and international agencies. New physiological oral contraceptives should be available soon and at a low cost.

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The greatest obstacle to any effective birth control program is the opposition by the two great authoritarian organizations of the world today—the Russian Communists and the Catholic church. Both organizations are opposed to any effective control of the birth rate. The Communists believe that the Soviet system of agriculture can support an unlimited population, even though yields per acre in Russia are among the world's lowest. The Catholic position has been expressed by the Reverend W. J. Gibbons, in an address before the Population Association of America, as follows: "Man needs material wealth, but not at the price of losing his soul. Hence as the Catholic sees it, the morally unacceptable in matters of sex, as well as in other departments of life, cannot be used to solve temporal problems. Ecological difficulties arising from population increase or disequilibrium are no exception."

These various taboos against birth control have little effect on a civilized and educated people, as is evident from the low birth rates in Belgium, France and Italy and the declining birth rate in the U.S.S.R., but they do prevent action at the national or international level. Catholic pressure has prevented the United Nations from considering a survey of population problems in various parts of the world, and was effective in suppressing the Ackerman report on the role of birth control in Japan. Judging from an editorial in the *New China News*, the Communists are trying to persuade the Chinese that the Malthusian doctrine was invented by the capitalists to justify poverty, and that the Soviet system of agriculture in China could support many times the present population.

If the dissemination of birth control information and techniques is to be restricted by ancient taboos and religious dogma, there can be no hope for the demographic transition in the overpopulated and underdeveloped countries of the world. In the words of the Mutual Security Agency Advisory Committee, "We do ourselves and our friends in the less developed countries a disservice if we pretend that the poverty in these countries reflects only the inadequacy of resources, or their ineffective utilization." There can be no hope for a decent life for all mankind unless birth rates in all parts of the world are rapidly reduced to little more than a third of the physiological maximum.

CORRECTION

We regret that in our Summer, 1953, issue there was an error on page 339 of the article by Bradford Smith, "The Making of a 'Communist.'" Line 33 should begin with organizing strikes, *not* the organization of strikes.

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..... Under Whatever Sky .....

IRWIN EDMAN

The Noise of Progress

It was announced from England the ther day that engineers had hopes of ventually reducing the noise of jet enines which makes the sound of ordinary irplanes seem relatively a murmur. Noth-ıg could better illustrate one of the prices 're pay for what our grandfathers blandly alled progress.

You can hurtle along at supersonic peeds, but only at the cost of a tremendous acket in the whole area of the airport from vhich you rise or to which you descend. The rapidity of subway transit in New York outside of rush hours) is one of the won-lers of the world, and its rattling pande-nonium one of the world's scandals. The aster, apparently the more frenetic; now he swiftest barrels make the most noise.

There seems to be involved here a law of norals as well as a law of physics. It is ap-›arently a form of retributive justice. We ›ay in bedlam for our highly original sins ›f breaking through sound barriers and noving at inhuman velocities. Is it pos-ibly to remind us that we are passing the imits of decent human locomotion? The aucepan begins to simmer, the teakettle to vhistle, and we know that things have come o a boil. The noise of our jet planes is a ›ymptom, doubtless, that our civilization is oming to a boil, too—a moral warning, a langer signal. We turn down the gas jet; ve tune down the jet engine.

Not that we need supersonic speed to re-nind us that quietude has vanished from ›ur world. There are homes where radio ınd television sets are never turned off or turned down, as neighbors can testify—and not only in New York, either. There are villages in Devonshire where in every old-world cottage the loudspeaker is turned on full blast. The streets of Italian cities are filled with motorcyclists who have never heard of a muffler.

Some of us still cherish quietude, or think we do, and sigh for what has indeed become, when we occasionally find it, an unearthly silence. Newspapermen, it is said, can work best to the clatter of other people's typewriters; Proust could work and live only in a cork-lined room. The threshold of pain varies in these matters; and Italians, even in primitive hamlets, manage, without benefit of juke boxes, to revel in noise. Anyone who has ever tried to sleep on a Saturday evening in an inn facing a Tuscan piazza knows that the chatter of human voices can be as distracting as boiler factories or jet engines. But in the old days it was possible to escape to fields now disquieted by the hum of airplanes overhead, to river banks where one listens now to the sound of other picnickers' portable radios.

The two philosophers, says James Stephens in *The Crock of Gold*, liked to listen to the sound of their own voices. To them everything else was noise. The two philosophers sound a little vain. But a true philosopher tends to regard his own voice as noise, too, and to seek a deeper silence, in which he can perhaps listen for the quiet sound of truth—very faint indeed—and, even to philosophers, sometimes scarcely audible. It is necessary to listen very closely; for once, in a way, one wishes sounds were louder. Truth, too, often mumbles, and in a whisper at that.

No More Questions

"What is philosophy?" said the young man at the bar in the steamer lounge where we had been chatting.

I had been asked the question so often that I was tempted to say I didn't know, or that there were lots of books in the library,

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or why hadn't he found out in the four years at college, in celebration of the conclusion of which he was on his way to Europe. But I thought maybe it might never occur to him to ask that particular question again. Perhaps I ought to try to make a conversion while I could. A young man at a bar in a steamer lounge may be just ripe for conversion to the life of reason.

So I began to try to make him see. I told him how philosophy began in criticism, how he could not be certain of anything, even of his own existence, how he couldn't be secure as to what was the good life, or what the use or value of anything he planned or aspired to. This method had worked before. I would try it once again. But the more the young man assented to these successive propositions, the more hostile he became.

"Well, if that is what philosophy is, I want none of it," he said. "I can see those questions, but they're *not* for me."

"How do you know if you've never tried?" I said. "How do you *know*? How do you know they're not for *you*?"

"Because I've been through things like that," the young man said. "They make me nervous." He banged his hand on the table. "I don't *want* to think about those things. I started last year beginning to wonder why I was doing what I was doing. I confess I've never worried about whether I exist or not. I don't propose to begin worrying about *that* now. I simply won't, *I won't!*" He looked at me menacingly. "You're not going to get me caught in anything like that. I simply won't." It was clear that some day he would.

The Prophet Motive

The tax structure is a term more ominous in its incidence than it sounds. It is now widely held to be responsible for the destruction of initiative. Television tycoons will not build new television sets, movie stars will not make new films, cigarette manufacturers will not produce any more cigarettes, professors will not write new textbooks. When they look at the income tax brackets, they come to the conclusion that the extra income just isn't worth th extra trouble. There are those who forese total desuetude for our society with th profit motive thus wantonly eliminate They forecast a nation of sluggards and- what is almost as bad—moral deterioratio in a people once famous for vitality: famine of television sets, of cigarettes, c films, of textbooks, and of other more e sential commodities as well.

No one, of course, has paused to reflec on the incalculable contributions to th national welfare that may accrue from wha is no longer made or done by those who ca foresee no gain from the making or th doing. The cigarettes *not* produced will b better for us than those that are; withou television sets we may have time to read and without textbooks we may be tempte actually to do so.

Meanwhile, for the makers and doer themselves there is a clear spiritual gain The modern system of internal revenue b a subtle indirection compels a good man people to do what they really want to do instead of prompting them to extra occu pations to which only financial greed o pressure has directed them. By law they are indirectly compelled to choose only wha they really wish to do.

There is, of course, a long tradition that the profit motive removed, people would do nothing at all, save, if they happen to b Buddhists, contemplate their navels. Even now, with pecuniary lures present only in vestigial degree, there are persons still known to do something, if it be nothing more than playing canasta or solving cross word puzzles, or writing letters to newspapers, or swimming the English Channel.

It has long been pondered by latter-day moralists what motives would remain after (as modern government has almost achieved) the total elimination of the profit incentive. What other motives could there be?

The classical tradition has long celebrated other stimuli: for one, Milton's "last infirmity of noble minds." But fame is notoriously a delusion, and modern engines of publicity have made it even more precarious than Marcus Aurelius declared it to be. The very means by which names are made world-

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famous in a week make other names world-famous a week later. The stars of last month's headlines are then extinct. The thought of this is a corrective to fame as a spur to action. Duty is sometimes still offered as a catalytic. Duty to what, to whom? To all mankind? But then perhaps one is a traitor to one's country. To one's country? But then perhaps one is being ruthless to the whole of mankind. To oneself? But the psychiatrists have hardly made the self worth anyone's dutifulness. The blunt fact is that unless we undertake things these days for their own sweet or dubious sake, we may all be lounging in such contemplative inaction as some Western propagandists for yoga seem to advise.

The curious and perhaps encouraging fact emerges, however, that people are doing things for their own sake, both the best and the worst of them. "When the cosher's not a-murdering his mother, he loves to lie a-basking in the sun," says W. S. Gilbert.

But the enterprising industrial or corporation manager seems to go on with his job, though he is really but a conduit wherethrough his large salary passes to the government. The scholar seems not to stop when he has reached a full professorship or even receded to a pension. Poets, as they have done long before the modern tax structure (which doesn't enter much into their concerns anyway), continue to write poems, even though fame, as well as profit, is extremely unlikely to reach them. And there are, it goes without saying, always among us some who pride themselves on such a clear and saving vision of the world that the prophet motive alone keeps them going.

The Old Gentleman and a World Turned Pink

The old gentleman looked around the table in the dining room of the transatlantic steamer.

"Things couldn't be *worse*," he said as he beamed at me through his spectacles. "Couldn't be worse," he said, and looked at me challengingly—and happily.

"Internationally? Domestically? Morally?" I asked.

"*Any* way, *every* way. I'm over seventy years old, and I have never seen them worse," he said.

"The present administration?" I suggested, though I doubted he could mean that. At dinner the night before, he had revealed that he was the wealthy manufacturer of a well-known cold remedy. Besides, he had a friend in the Cabinet.

"Heavens, no!" he said. "*Great* improvement, this crowd. No, just in general. It's pretty dreadful, if you ask me. Or even if you don't. Very discouraging, all these Pinks." He looked at me over his glasses again. "All you professors are Pinks, too. All sorts of immoral ideas floating around. Some people's morals are in a terrible state. And such shoddy stuff they manufacture these days. Take these foam lather preparations. No good, but they sell. And anyway, these electric razors—ruining the shaving cream business altogether. A man doesn't know what *stocks* to buy these days, he really doesn't. A man doesn't know, a businessman I mean, what to prepare for—peace or war. And all this welfare-state business. Terrible, terrible. How is the Stilton, waiter? We had some last night, wasn't *fit* to eat. No decent *cheese* any more, no decent anything. And the professors all Pink."

"You're looking in the pink yourself, sir," I said. "Do you feel better than things look?"

"Oh, it doesn't affect me none," said the old gentleman. "Don't allow it to. I tell that to my friends in business. They grow apoplectic about things. Some of them have died of it. But I tell them things are *worse* than they have *ever* been, and they may get worse yet, though I don't see how they could. But it'll be after they and I are gone. I won't be here to see it. As they say, after me the deluge. No, come to think of it, things *can't* get worse."

"That's a comfort," I said, "for I expect to live yet awhile."

"I'd be sorry for you if I thought things could get worse," the old gentleman said. "But relax! They can't." He poured himself some wine.

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..... The Revolving Bookstand .....

The Art and Practice of War

THE ROMMEL PAPERS. Edited by B. H. Liddell Hart with the assistance of Lucie-Maria Rommel, Manfred Rommel and General Fritz Bayerlein. Translated by Paul Findlay. Illustrated. *New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. 545 pp. $6.00.*

Reviewed by Gordon A. Craig

During all of his campaigns in the Second World War, Field Marshal Erwin Rommel took careful notes for the book he intended to write when the conflict was over, and whenever he had breathing space, he developed these into a narrative. This was never completed, and for his personal safety, Rommel destroyed that part which dealt with the Normandy invasion before he was murdered by the Nazis. But enough of it survived to provide a comprehensive account of Rommel's campaign in France in 1940 and of the war in Africa; and this, supplemented by extensive selections from Rommel's letters and additional material written by his son and his former chief of staff, has now been edited by Captain Liddell Hart under the title *The Rommel Papers.*

This is a remarkable book. Unlike many other great commanders who lacked both literary skill and the power to explain why they did what they did, Rommel wrote with the same verve that characterized his operations. His accounts of the fighting in the desert—skillfully and critically annotated by the editor—bring to the reader a sense of sharing in the movement, the violence and the confusion of the fighting; and, what is more important, they accurately chart the progress of Rommel's thinking as the tactical situation developed, giving the reasons for his command decisions at every stage. In addition to this, his narrative is liberally sprinkled with reflections on the art and practice of armored war, and longer analytical essays, at least one of which, on "The Rules of Desert Warfare," is— as Liddell Hart remarks in his introduction—a masterly piece of military thinking.

The main importance of *The Rommel Papers,* as their editor notes, is the light they shed on Rommel's military leadership. He was—with Guderian, Germany's other great armored commander—the master of the blitzkrieg, which he succinctly defined as "the art of concentrating strength at one point, forcing a breakthrough, rolling up and securing the flanks on either side, and then penetrating like lightning, before the enemy has time to react, deep into his rear." But he was not, as has often been loosely stated, a purely offensive thruster who was unhappy and inept when placed in a defensive position; and he was not, as is sometimes charged, a gambler who had a long string of luck but was eventually ruined by his propensity for plunging. Rommel had few peers in the ability to exploit the offensive potentialities of armored war, but the effectiveness of his offensive strokes was aided by the way in which he prepared defensive traps for his opponent's attacks. He was as proficient

GORDON A. CRAIG, professor of history at Princeton University, is a specialist on military and diplomatic subjects. He was the collaborating editor of *Makers of Modern Strategy: Military Thought from Machiavelli to Hitler* and, with Felix Gilbert, has just published *The Diplomats, 1919-1939.*

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with the shield as with the sword, and his campaigns against Wavell and Auchinleck adequately demonstrate this.

To the charge of being a gambler Rommel was deeply sensitive, and he wrote on one occasion: "One must differentiate between strategical and tactical boldness and a military gamble. A bold operation is one in which success is not a certainty but which in case of failure leaves one with sufficient forces in hand to cope with whatever situation may arise. A gamble . . . is an operation which can lead either to victory or to the complete destruction of one's force."

In general, Rommel's journal shows that his boldness was based on careful calculation, while it clearly explodes the theory that his final defeat in Africa was caused by rashness. Without depreciating Montgomery's generalship in any way, it must be granted that that defeat was prepared by the inadequate appreciation by Hitler and the O. K. W. of the possibilities and requirements of the war in Africa, by the inefficiency of the Italian supply system, and, at the very end, by the operational rigidity which characterized Hitler's thinking in the last years of the war.

Aside from its brilliant battle pieces and its discussions of armored tactics, this book includes much else that will interest the general reader and the specialist alike. The profound differences in strategical concept which existed in the upper echelons of the German army, the irresponsible interventions of party dignitaries like Goering into the operational sphere, and the frustrations involved in trying to conduct effective coalition war with Fascist Italy as an ally are clearly illustrated. Little light is cast, however, on the important and controversial question of Rommel's role in the movement of resistance against Hitler. Manfred Rommel, on the basis of conversations with his father, believes that the Field Marshal began to think of breaking with Hitler in the last months of 1943. Since Rommel destroyed any papers that might bear on this question, however, any definitive statements are impossible.

Burning and Crested Song

THE COLLECTED POEMS OF DYLAN THOMAS. *New York: New Directions. 199 pp. $3.75.*

Reviewed by William Y. Tindall

When I first met Dylan Thomas—it was about three years ago on West 11th Street, as I recall—he interrupted his remarks about Llareggub, a private country, and announced: "First, I am a Welshman. Second, I am a drunkard; and third, a lover of mankind—especially women." A hush fell upon the party; for no one there but saw the importance of that announcement, which, by parody of T. S. Eliot's foreword to *For Lancelot Andrewes,* served to declare Thomas' independence of the great tradition. Indeed, almost alone of important poets since Eliot's day, Thomas shows no sign of following the master. He has created what he calls his own "rumpus of shapes," and for his matter he takes life itself, or "the force that through the green fuse drives the flower."

His *Collected Poems,* he says, contains all the poems he wishes to preserve. A check through his earlier volumes from *18 Poems* (1934) to *In Country Sleep,* which appeared last year, proves that he wishes to preserve them all or all but all: he has omitted two of his poems. But he has added a "Prologue," written especially for this collection. "Look," he exclaims in this address to the reader, "I build my bellowing ark." That he has added only one compartment to it since last year is not surprising; for although extravagant, he is not copious.

This collection, showing judgment equal to craft, makes it plain to me that with the possible exceptions of T. S. Eliot and Wallace Stevens, Thomas is the most excellent living poet in the English tongue. I am not alone in this conviction. The first

✪ WILLIAM YORK TINDALL, professor of English at Columbia University, is the author of books on James Joyce and other contemporary writers. An article on Dylan Thomas by Mr. Tindall appeared in the Autumn, 1948, issue of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR.

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printing of six thousand copies of *Collected Poems* sold out in three months, and another large printing has been required. This record, unusual in our society, places Thomas next to Eliot among marketable poets. It may be that some of the demand for his poems can be traced to his appearances during the past two years on platforms throughout this country, and some can be traced to the convenience of having between two covers poems scattered through volumes long out of print or never issued here. His popularity, whatever the reason, makes it no longer necessary to announce his achievement. It is enough to swell the general applause.

Chronologically arranged, this collection allows us to survey his development. His work falls into three periods that should satisfy the most academic demands upon a poet—as Thomas and I decided one afternoon last year in a bar on West 23rd Street. The first, we agreed, should be called the period of "womb and tomb." In the early poems, which concern birth, death, and all the troubles of adolescence, a dazzling confusion of images produces a sudden experience that precedes understanding. Maybe it is best to submit to it with a kind of alert surrender. But if we must dissect, we find images from Freud and the Bible, which, carrying definite meanings, quarrel with the indefinite surface. "From limbs that had the measure of the worm," a line from an early poem, has an immediate effect. The analyzed *worm* yields the serpent of Eden, the grave, and love's instrument, while *had,* equally ambivalent, means "took the measure" or "had the size of." No wonder we are dazzled; for the line implies birth, death, fall, redemption, erection and resurrection.

Thomas emerged from these obscurities during the war. "Ceremony After a Fire Raid" is typical of the second period. And as for the third, distinguished by a wry acceptance of marriage and of growing older, it may be called the period of humanity. "Fern Hill," one of the most radiant lyrics in the language, is a poem of how it felt to be young. But what is meant by the "long-legged bait" or "the white giant's

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thigh" is less immediately clear. It was at a bar, while Mrs. Thomas waited next door, that Thomas explained both of these poems; but if I were to tell what he said about them, I should be guilty of the "intentional fallacy." Risking the "genetic fallacy," which is almost as bad, I might point out that Thomas' lament of the "old ram rod," suggests Joyce's "ramrod the meaty hunter." But it is safer perhaps to say that Joyce and Thomas are alike in art and "the love of Man." This is most evident in the third period, but all three reveal what Thomas calls "burning and crested" song.

Case Studies in International Relations

THE DIPLOMATS, 1919-1939. Edited by Gordon A. Craig and Felix Gilbert. *Princeton: Princeton University Press. 700 pp. $9.00.*

Reviewed by Richard A. Newhall

When an excellent piece of scholarship also proves to be an effective tract for the times, something unusual has happened. If on finishing this book, the first impulse, in a spirit of pessimism, is to quote Oxenstiern's remark, "Behold, my son, with how little wisdom the world is governed," the more considered reaction is one of hope that scholarship can contribute to that better understanding of the facts of political life so much needed by the American people. The scholarly effort to tell an accurate story in a reasonable, informed way may lack the strident overtones necessary to compete with some of the voices which reach the public ear. (Perhaps, however, Elmer Davis will find time to read this volume.) Even more hope can be found by those who remember the discussion among intellectuals following World War I, a discussion which produced a body of oversimplified ideas about the diplomatic causes of that war, many of which now look rather sad. Indeed, one important feature of this volume is its showing the unfortunate influence of those notions about the wickedness of "secret diplomacy" and the presumed superiority of new, open, democratic methods. While disclaiming any idea of defending professional diplomacy, the authors admit that "if the book must have a thesis, this is it—it is dangerous to carry distrust of professional diplomacy to the point where you always insist upon doing what the professionals say must not be done and always refuse to do what they describe as necessary."

The story shows the frequent "unwise and disruptive invasions" of the legitimate sphere of diplomatic activity which take place when legislatures, newspapers, and politicians who mistake themselves for statesmen undermine respect for diplomatic professionals. This, of course, is not peculiar to democracies. The revolutionary, totalitarian states have their own forms of the struggle between the cautious professionals and the arrogant, dynamic amateurs. Indeed, one of the more interesting features of this discussion relates to the problems facing the Foreign Office personnel in Russia, Italy and Germany of adjusting to a revolutionary regime toward which many of them were unsympathetic, critical and contemptuous. But in the democracies, not only must the diplomat see clearly himself, but there must be some way by which the people, whose ideas make "public opinion," are taught to face up to realities without demanding everything for nothing.

In my opinion, the chief merit of this book is the way it recounts a familiar story of international relations in terms of the personalities who managed affairs. The chapters have the qualities of case studies by country and by person. In that way they show what demands diplomatic negotiations make upon those who have to estimate situations, weigh alternatives, make decisions, and persuade *in time* those who must

✪ RICHARD A. NEWHALL is professor of European history at Williams College. He has recently served as adviser to the Historical Sections of the Air Force and of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

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take action. By making this a co-operative effort (twenty-one chapters by seventeen authors), it has been possible to exploit at an early date a large body of recently published material, even that in Czech, Turkish and Russian. That the different writers have maintained an even standard of treatment is evidence of unusual ability on their part and of extraordinary editorial skill. While it is more rewarding to read the chapters in order, each of them can be read profitably by itself. The editors admit that there are regrettable omissions in their choice of persons for consideration, notably Vansittart. It is too bad that Sir Walford Selby's recently published *Diplomatic Twilight, 1930-1940* was not available for study and comment.

Although in a very general fashion the authors sympathize with the professional point of view, they are adequately critical of professional incompetents like Sir Nevile Henderson and of careerists like Dirksen. They also appreciate effective amateurs. There is irony in the fact that one of the impressions left upon this reader is that the French professional diplomats were, on the whole, the most competent performers within their limited jurisdiction. This serves to emphasize the fact that policy decisions are made by super-diplomatic authorities, who may, and often do, ignore professional advice, sometimes with success. Another general impression is an appreciation of the limitations of diplomacy. The story shows that mutual desires to find a peaceful solution based upon a mutual acceptance of reasonable and legitimate national interests is essential. When this is absent, no amount of diplomatic skill can do more than effect temporary accommodations, or build up barriers to unreasonable, aggressive policies. How to deal with the psychological problems of inflated national ego, heroic delusions of grandeur, and theories of historical inevitability are matters to which ordinary diplomatic techniques are ill-suited. When "gangsters and brigands . . . have more energy than honest men," diplomacy is not enough.

Some Europeans are said to be apprehensive about the alleged political and diplomatic inexperience and ineptitude of Americans. The chapters here about American ambassadors Dodd, Bullitt and Kennedy, which make very interesting reading, will not allay this apprehension. But most of the other chapters suggest that other governments, even the most experienced and expert, have recent records of ineptitude which it will be hard for the United States to surpass. According to this story, the palm for diplomatic achievement and ability would seem to belong to the Turks, while Colonel Beck might be considered the best candidate for the opposite award—with, however, several other close competitors.

Brief Comments

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the occasion of his eightieth birthday, Mr. Tomlinson recaptures the excitement of voyages made from Greenwich Reach to Malaya; he re-creates the years before Great Wars, when men were free to explore, and when such monuments of achievement as Carlyle and Thomas Hardy were visible in the flesh. The autobiographical chapters, "A Mingled Yarn" and "On Being Out of Date," affirm with great charm the value of men's nobler, adventurous traditions. Several of these pieces have been salvaged from editions of books by Mr. Tomlinson which were destroyed during the bombing of London.

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LETTERS OF SHERWOOD ANDERSON. Selected and edited with an introduction and notes by Howard Mumford Jones in association with Walter B. Rideout. Illustrated. *Little, Brown.* $6.00.

Sherwood Anderson once remarked, "I take letter writing partly as a substitute for drink." This helps explain why there are almost 5,000 letters in the Anderson collection at the Newberry Library. Of these, 401—all written after Anderson was forty—are selected here to illuminate Anderson's struggles as a writer, his relationships with publishers and other famous writers, his philosophy of art, and his reactions to leading social, political and economic problems. Some of these carefully edited letters, like Anderson's novels, are pathetically repetitious. But many of them, like his best short stories, deserve to live and keep forever the sweetness of character, the unflinching integrity as artist, the insatiable love for people that make Sherwood Anderson one of the grandest and most poignant spirits in modern literature.

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through Margayya, the chief character, and through him one comes to know almost all there is to know of life in an Indian town.

YOU SHALL KNOW THEM. By Vercors. Translated by Rita Barisse. *Little, Brown. $3.50.*

In a tone of optimistic and at times witty urbanity, Vercors attempts to answer the age-old question: What is man? If the conclusion reached is not entirely conclusive, there is much along the path of Douglas Templemore's expedition through the wilds of New Guinea and the Old Bailey that will please and edify all readers.

Artistically, the book is less successful. The first half combines the malicious charm of an early Evelyn Waugh *contretemps* with the pseudo-scientific excitement of Rider Haggard. The latter portion rattles the bones of anthropological dialectics too vigorously for any pretense that the work is a novel to be maintained. All in all, however, it is a light but provocative reconsideration of *la condition humaine.*

THE MAN WITHOUT QUALITIES. By Robert Musil. Translated by Eithne Wilkins and Ernst Kaiser. *Coward-McCann. $4.00.*

Ulrich is a pre-World War I Austrian intellectual whose sense of reality is weakened by his equally strong sense of the possible. He attributes this condition to the loss of a unifying moral principle brought on by the social-economic changes of the nineteenth century and the precise but limited thinking of Galileo. Without qualities to guide him, Ulrich is laden with shifting attitudes, with serious moral paradoxes. Through three love affairs and a well-satirized campaign to discover the "true" spirit of Austria in honor of His Majesty's long reign, he wrestles with the world's guilt. His solution is unknown, as the conclusion of this lengthy novel is still to be translated.

CHILDREN ARE BORED ON SUNDAY. By Jean Stafford. *Harcourt, Brace. $3.00.*

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THE ECHOING GROVE. By Rosamond Lehmann. *Harcourt, Brace. $3.95.*

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Although this novel has been widely heralded, it will disappoint those among us who ask a novel to spill over with life.

THE LIGHT IN THE FOREST. By Conrad Richter. *Knopf. $2.50.*

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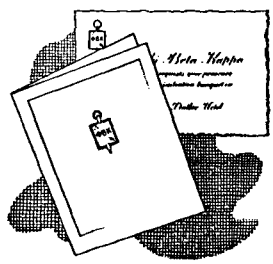

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The "Current American Stereotype"?

In his article "An Atlantic Curtain?" [AS: Summer, 1953] William G. Carleton charges that "America's growing conformity is . . . endangering the . . . unity of the Western world."

Americans *are* guilty of conformity; most of us have recognized the threat of world communism, and the United States has led the thinking of the free world towards uniting against it. It has been the Europeans who have been the divisive forces in the drive to unify for mutual security. France has been unwilling to pursue foreign policies that she knows to be wisest in long-run terms because she does not want to give up the ghost of colonialism in Tunisia and Indo-China. She refuses to make needed domestic economic reforms that would enable her to contribute her share towards the common defense of Europe. The British and other nations are pressing for increased trade with Iron Curtain nations—nations with whom they are at war (hot *and* cold). Other examples could be cited to show the subordination of the world-wide aims agreed upon by the West to their domestic aims, which are founded on political and economic trepidation. It has been the United States that has consistently recognized that the fate of the free nations depends on cohesiveness, and it has just as consistently reconciled its policies with those of its procrastinating allies and made concession after concession to them.

Carleton tells us that Europeans feel Americans view international politics as a conflict of moralities that can never be compromised. After the Second World War, the United States was ready to give the Soviets their due, commensurate with the Soviet position as a world power and with international law. It has been the consistent violation of international agreement by the Soviets and their subsequent expansionist moves that have awakened the United States to the threat of communism. It is a pity that the rest of the West is not so enlightened by experience and is ready to accept any Soviet relaxation as "the peace" and simultaneously junk all the good work already done in making the free world safer from the Soviet threat.

SIDNEY HELFANT
Brooklyn, New York

★ ★ ★

Professor William G. Carleton's article, "An Atlantic Curtain?" in the Summer, 1953, issue of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR is thought-provocative.

Bertrand Russell maintains (p. 265) that "liberty is drying up in the United States," but the Founding Fathers assumed that all freedoms were limited by good judgment. Any man can call Joe Louis a liar to his face, but that would not show good judgment. Freedom of speech and freedom of the press are both limited by law. Freedom is the very breath of American life, but good judgment, if we have it, limits us in all that we do.

A contradiction, too, runs throughout the article. Professor Carleton indicates (p. 269) a shrinkage of Europeans who sympathize with "American free enterprise ideas." He implies that we should abandon our individualism and become socialist, but

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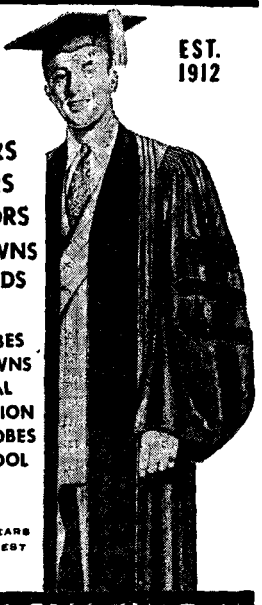

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insists that Europeans think (p. 272) that we should become "aware of cultural differences in the world." If there are other cultures that we should consider, why should not Europeans include the American type in their survey?

"Indigenous collectivism" Professor Carleton takes for granted (pp. 272-273), but why should the same pattern appear in Bolivia, Chile, Brazil, Malaya, Indo-China, China and elsewhere? In regard to China, I have learned from some members of the Chinese Nationalist government that it was not a spontaneous agrarian movement, but one inspired by literature from Moscow. Mao Tse-tung, with whom one of these Chinese went to school in China, was steeped in the works of Marx, Lenin and Stalin. Officials from Moscow and thoroughly indoctrinated Chinese are today "washing" adult minds in China, while the Soviet ideology is being instilled into the children. There is no connection between such procedure and "indigenous collectivism."

The Europeans, too, consider it their mission (p. 271) to acquaint Americans "with the rich diversity of the Western heritage." We in America have obtained all that through our own intellectual activities and do not need the nursing bottles of present-day Europeans.

GREGORY D. WALCOTT
Long Island University
Brooklyn, New York

★ ★ ★

These letters reflect what Europeans call the current American stereotype. That stereotype holds that a world Communist conspiracy is an immediate threat to the international balance of power, which threat calls for much conformity of thought and conduct and the primacy of military preparations. On the other hand, many European leaders and thinkers, while conceding the necessity for military preparations, insist that the threat to the balance of power is not as critical as Americans think, that the situation does not require as much conformity as American opinion has imposed, that in the long run the international crisis can best be met by non-military measures.

Europeans believe that two fundamental non-military factors will resolve the international crisis. One factor is the more widespread encouragement and adoption of social-democratic policies in Asia to help Asiatics move from feudalism to industrialism without resort to totalitarian devices. Europeans observe that the Americans, however, do not seem to like Nehru's government in India much better than they like Mao's government in China. Europeans also say that Americans seem to think that if the United States were to encourage social democracy or moderate socialism abroad, it would be betraying free enterprise at home—which, of course, is not the case. It merely would be recognizing realistically that the conditions which make possible successful free enterprise in America cannot be duplicated today in Europe, much less in Asia.

The other factor is the exploitation of nationalism, the strongest force in the world today, to split the Communist international front and thus restore a less dangerous multiple balance of power. So strongly do Europeans (and Asiatics and even Canadians) feel that these factors ultimately will work us out of the present crisis without a big war, that they have consistently warned against aggressive policies which might enlarge the war in Asia. The recent revolts of Social-Democratic workers in East Germany and of "Green Socialists," Socialists, and nationalist (Titoist) Communists in the satellite countries have underscored the divisive force of nationalism. Tito himself, in published interviews, has boasted that what is taking place among the East European satellites is a vindication of his policy of adapting communism to national cultures and national ends. It seems that Communists who "went to Moscow" may have to yield to national conditions back home just as democrats who in the 1790's "went to Paris" once had to do.

Europeans are quite aware of American achievements: they recognize the American culture as a part of the West's rich pluralism. Indeed, they see more clearly than most Americans that a prime urge behind the revolutions among the "backward" peoples

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is to get American technology and mass production; but they also see more clearly than most Americans why peoples without much accumulated capital must employ in part some collectivist measures if they are to acquire heavy industries, steel mills, and hydroelectric plants within a generation. Moreover, the United States today is the leader, and Europeans are literally forced to consider American points of view, while Americans are not forced to consider European points of view. For instance, the United States in the Battle Act imposed restrictions on European trade with the East, even in some nonstrategic materials, although the Europeans, particularly the British, desperately need foreign markets. However, the United States did not offer to open any American markets by way of compensation.

Because the Russians after 1945 pursued international policies of intransigence and fanaticism is no reason why the West should do so. A cool appraisal of the long-time balance of power, flexible rather than doctrinaire policies, respect for the pluralism and diversities of the Western world, even for the "peculiar" divisions of the French, are surer ways of maintaining American leadership, winning the conflict and preserving freedom.

WILLIAM G. CARLETON
University of Florida
Gainesville, Florida

Timely Prophet

Those of us who owe a debt to Emerson for the liberating force of his ideas can be grateful to THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR for remembering his sesquicentennial [AS: Summer, 1953]. Professor Whicher presents a point of view so different from that of the late Eduard Lindeman, in the article which you published in your Winter, 1946-47 number; the contrast suggests one reason for Emerson's continued popularity. He means so many different things to so many different people. Professor Lindeman wrote on "Emerson's Pragmatic Mood," quoting as one example of this, "I simply experiment, an endless seeker with no Past to my back." Growth was so important to him that it does not seem that Emerson would have been satisfied with Professor Whicher's appraisal of his using transcendentalism as a "tested secret of insulation from calamity." Lindeman suggests that he used it as a "means of cultural criticism," as a polarity, opposite to the materialism which he felt was endangering moral or spiritual forces in our national life.

The Emersonian tendency to use extremes or polarities of thought is commented on by Edward Emerson in his notes for both the essays which Professor Whicher analyzes. Edward also deplores his father's apparent callousness in the essay on *Experience*, and tries to excuse it on the basis of the critical period (1837-38) in which it was written, when the break with traditional ties was being made: "In his desire for utter freedom from hypocrisy, he makes over strong statements." Edward says that the essay on "The Tragic" was part of a series of lectures on "Human Life," given in 1838-39. He interprets his father's references to Fate in quite a different way from "impotence" or "humiliation" or "a renewed surrender to the Power that planned it that way." Edward comments on the development of his father's view of Fate as a "beneficent living law," and later in his notes to the essay of that name quotes from his father's journal of 1859, "Fate teaches the strength of Nature to man . . . Will is the perception of eternal necessity . . . a sharing of the true order of the universe. . . . It is born freedom of the intellect." Emerson's statement that "the revelation of thought takes us out of servitude into freedom" seemed to me a key to his attitude toward Fate, and I quoted it in an article on "The Natural History of the Will," which you published [AS: Summer, 1946]. What led me to write that was the respect I had for Emerson's psychological insights in his lectures on "The Natural History of the Intellect," which he gave to graduate students at Harvard from 1870 to 1872. He used a genetic approach, and I think it is only fair to him to use the same in appraising his personality and his thought. Like Lindeman, I believe that Emerson was

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fundamentally a psychologist, and that some of his insights are congruent with our contemporary thought in the field of mental hygiene and psychology, that he is "a prophet whose time is not yet out."

GRACE R. FOSTER
New York, New York

★ ★ ★

In the Summer edition of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, Mr. Stephen E. Whicher says of Emerson: "He is, finally, impenetrable, for all his forty-odd volumes." This simply states an inescapable truth regarding any really great character. It is not a matter of *understanding* Emerson, but rather one of feeling the expansiveness and power of his ideas. A bust of Emerson stands in the library at Concord; the face is asymmetrical and symbolizes that "inevitable duality" which literally saturates all that he wrote.

Emerson's summary of Plato's philosophy could very well be applied to himself: "The unity of Asia and the detail of Europe are in his [Plato's] brain. Metaphysics and natural philosophy expressed the genius of Europe; he substructs the religion of Asia as the base. In short a balanced soul was born, perceptive of the two elements." Mr. Whicher misses this all-pervasive savor and elects to describe Emerson's delicate physical constitution and his purely human inconsistencies. "A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds." If one would commune with the "Authentic Emerson," he must first be aware of certain fundamental ideas which, consciously or unconsciously, permeated his writings. Emerson was steeped in the philosophy of Asia and Greece as filtered through the alembic of Plato's mind. He envisioned the perfectibility of man through a long process of physical, intellectual and spiritual evolution. He postulated the Omnipresence of Deity and the Universality of Law as interdependent ideas and realities. His writings are free from any of those connotations which inhere in the words *realism* and *objectivity,* as currently bandied about by sundry academic psychologists. The doctrine of metapsychosis runs like Ariadne's thread throughout many essays. He believed in a fundamental and age-old gnosis concerning the "whence, why and whither" of man, periodically brought to humanity by Great Souls or Teachers, such as Krishna, Buddha, Lao-tse, Confucius, Christ Jesus and many more.

"There is a crack in everything that God has made," said Emerson, and this points up the common tendency to seize upon the faults, defects, and frailties of others, lending to them unwonted prominence. Thus a very small object, if held too close to the eye, will obscure the sun at meridian height. We trust Mr. Whicher's forthcoming book will not obscure the most brilliant orb thus far to rise in the American firmament of literary lights.

B. THOMAS SHROPSHIRE
Los Angeles, California

★ ★ ★

I am happy to see that my article on Emerson has provoked criticism. That is the purpose of such discussion. I have nothing to add to it now; it must defend itself. Of course it should be read in the context of the great body of previous discussion of Emerson, of which Lindeman's and Foster's articles in THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR are two important parts. (It was written in that context, and also, I realize, in the context of my own forthcoming book-length study of Emerson, to which the article stands in the relation of afterthought rather than summary.) I have no notion that article or book contains *the* truth about Emerson; I don't believe such things are a practical possibility in literary criticism. One does his best, simply, to approximate *his* truth; collectively (we hope) we move toward *our* truth, as a kind of Platonic ideal, following typically just such a process of challenge, resistance, and modified assimilation as I would like to think is now begun in these pages. It should not be necessary for me to add that I would hardly have devoted many years to the study of Emerson if I had not been convinced of his continued importance to us and to the world.

STEPHEN E. WHICHER
Swarthmore, Pennsylvania

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A Fifth Step

I have read with great interest Mr. Bradford Smith's article, "The Making of a 'Communist'" [AS: Summer, 1953]. He has given four steps for a program, all of which are excellent. May I add a fifth, and one which I think is responsible for the type of situation in which Mr. Smith finds himself; for essentially the problem is one of leadership. My fifth would be that every college professor pledge himself to expose any colleague who permits himself to follow the party line.

If our professors were to do that, we should with one fell swoop knock out the suspicion which has been pinned upon college professors and other intellectual leaders by those who are using academic freedom for the purpose of undermining it. The folks who are on college faculties know who are the people who poison minds, and they owe it to intellectual leadership to make these individuals known. In this way can public confidence be brought to the point where it should be. McCarthy could not have carried any weight if the college professors of the country had taken and were taking the leadership in clearing their own house. The only reason that McCarthy has any power throughout the nation is that he has had the guts to talk and act where others have maintained silence.

CHARLES A. TONSOR
Brooklyn, New York

A Matter of Labels

The article by Mr. Bradford Smith [AS: Summer, 1953] was truly pathetic; but perhaps not for the reasons that Mr. Smith intended.

Mr. Smith was deeply aggrieved because, when he started to dabble in local New England politics, some of his opponents called him a Communist. He regards this incident as extraordinary, outrageous and sinister. Actually, it seems to me, it merely indicates that Mr. Smith isn't very familiar with political processes in this country, and is far too sensitive to take part in them with much promise of success.

American politics always has been a rough business. At various other times and places in our history Mr. Smith might have been called a Copperhead, an atheist, an Abolitionist, a Know-Nothing, a pro-German, or a Secessionist—all of them labels which in their time carried much the same connotation that Communist does today. Anyone active in politics incurs the risk of being called also a thief, traitor, tyrant and grafter, often without the slightest justification. That is part of the price of entry into the game, as it always has been and probably will continue to be for some time.

This is true not only in America. May I suggest that Mr. Smith read the speeches which Randolph Churchill made against Gladstone, Chamberlain, and Lord Salisbury during the last quarter of the nineteenth century; he will find that Churchill's language makes most current political invective sound very mild indeed.

I mention all this because it seems to me that Mr. Smith is reading too much significance into a fairly commonplace incident; and it would be a pity if the readers of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR took his lamentations too seriously.

JOHN FISCHER
White Plains, New York

★ ★ ★

If Mr. Fischer will take another look at my article, he will find that only part of it had anything to do with local politics. It is the anti-intellectualist campaign—the tendency to call any writer, educator or minister a Communist—which concerns me. Recent events indicate that the trend continues.

BRADFORD SMITH
Shaftsbury, Vermont

The Critic's Critic

The exchange of comments between Harold Gilliam and Joseph Wood Krutch in the Summer, 1953, issue surprised me. Because of the excellence of his critical writings, Mr. Krutch had impressed me as a person who was capable of a detached attitude toward constructive criticism.

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I think the point that loss of confidence has affected "intellectuals," not the man in the street, is a valid one. There exists a very substantial split between the anxious egghead and the brashly confident lowbrow in our population. The critic's critic never said that the existence of a false confidence was a good thing—he said much of it was "misdirected" and required investigation. In fact, I suggest, the subject is broad enough for another essay, and you might commission Mr. Gilliam to do it.

ROSANNA SHAMRAY
Los Angeles, California

Economists Do Know Something

Professor Fritz Machlup's article entitled "Do Economists Know Anything?" [AS: Spring, 1953] is a praiseworthy contribution toward a better understanding of economists. Modern national and world economic life is exceedingly complex. The economist who can see in detail and hold in mind the whole national and world economy, and understand all the static and dynamic forces in operation, has not yet arrived. Because of the vastness of the subject, economists have seen the necessity of specialization. There are agricultural economists, business economists, transportation economists, labor economists, consumer economists, specialists in both public and private finance, economic statisticians, economic geographers, and economic historians, all of whom are trained to use scientific methods in their work. There are others who may be classified as politician economists, Robinson Crusoe economists, and Arabian Nights economists.

Closely associated with their employers and loyal to them, it is inevitable that business economists will seek information and advocate types of legislation which they believe to serve best the interests they represent. Even government employees in the fields of agricultural and labor economics find it difficult to hold strictly to the general welfare point of view. With great diversity of information, outlook and loyalty, conflicting opinions are certain to arise when a specific proposal relating to government action is under consideration. It is the existence of conflicting opinions that makes congressmen sometimes say it is a waste of time to bring economists to hearings. Yet economists have something important to contribute when congressmen learn how to use them.

Group thinking, participated in by specialists from the various fields of economics, led by a general economist with a statesmanship point of view, would be a means of making use of present-day economists in preparing desirable legislation. When that which is known on a given subject by all specialists is pooled, analyzed, and evaluated, a sound basis of action may be found. Group thinking is not debating. In debate each person *wills* to bring others to accept his opinion. In group thinking the *will to conclusion* is relaxed. Each member of the group opens his mind to new facts and ideas. In due course a consensus may be reached as a result of shared knowledge and objective. The conclusions reached by group thinking by economists will demonstrate that they do know something.

HENRY C. TAYLOR
Washington, D. C.

Special Features

Despite the fact that the price of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR subscription has been increased, I am happy, as always, to renew mine. I feel that it is easily the best magazine for thinking people in this country. One fact, however, has puzzled me. The last few issues have not contained any of the "special features"—the portraits of famous people, forums, oral discussions, etc.—that it was such a delight to look forward to and which made the SCHOLAR that much more valuable and distinctive. I think it would be a pity if for any reason the editorial board permanently discontinued these features.

CHARLES GARRETT
New York, New York

★ ★ ★

We thank Mr. Garrett, and refer him to page 466 of this issue.—THE EDITORS.

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